

HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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FROM RAMMOHUN TO DAYANANDA (1821-84)

VOLUME I: BENGAL

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To
THE SACRED MEMORY
OF
SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

PREFACE

The title of this work requires some explanation. 'Political thought' in the modern academic sense is a development possible only in a free state working out its destiny, or in a new state in process of formation out of the chaos of political strifes. (In a country like ours, amongst a people who have for ages been ruled over by a succession of foreigners no other political development is normally possible except acquiescence and encrusted conservation in self-defence.) From such a normal condition it has been the British domination—and therein lies the peculiar merit of it—that has slowly roused India to a new political consciousness. And once again after six centuries, a development of political thought has taken place, through criticism and appreciation of the British administrative system in all its different and expanding spheres, for that is the only way in which political thought can grow in a subject country, as it grew in the subject medieval countries of central Europe through discussion of questions affecting the Papal and Empire governments. It is, therefore, that I have thought it necessary to trace and show the ultimate growth of abstract political ideas in India *through* a history of the activities of Indian political organizations and of the changing

critical attitudes of Indian public men towards the Indo-British administration.

In this volume I have made an attempt to discover the original contribution of the Bengali thinkers to the political thought of the world. I have shown how even before Austin, Raja Rammohun made a reconciliation between the historical and analytical schools of jurisprudence and distinguished Law from Morality, how Akshaykumar Dutta preached the organismic theory of state before Herbert Spencer, and how he formulated the theory of state socialism in the fifties of the last century, and how Bankimchandra presented a new theory of Nationalism.

So far the writers of the history of the constitution of British India have presented it as a record of the measures taken by Parliament and the Government of British India to improve the political status of the people of this country. I have attempted to throw some new light on the subject-matter by showing that the periodical improvement in the status of Indians as reflected in the Acts of 1833, 1853, 1861, for example, was owing mainly to their own agitation for political and administrative reforms, thereby inducing the Government to concede their demands from time to time. My work, therefore, illustrates the inter-relation between law and public opinion in India.

I have traced the genesis of those political aspirations and sentiments which are puzzling the

Government, galvanising the nation and attracting the attention of the civilised world. The political ideas and theories of the greatest leaders of the Bengali thought in the pre-Congress era have been presented here for the first time in a compact and comprehensive form so as to enable the general readers as well as the statesmen and administrators to come to a better and quicker understanding of the trend of current politics.

I have not discussed the political ideas of Surendranath Banerjee, Bhudeva Mukherjee, Anandamohan Bose, W. C. Bonerjee and Rameshchandra Dutta as their speeches and writings of the pre-Congress era cannot be explained without reference to those of the post-Congress era.

I take this opportunity of thanking the authorities of the following libraries for allowing me facilities to work therein: (1) Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha's Library at Patna, (2) Dr. Ramdas Sen's Library at Berhampore, (3) Uttarpara Public Library, (4) Library of the British Indian Association, (5) Bangiya Sahitya Parishat Library, (6) Raja Radhakanta Deb's Library, (7) Calcutta University Library, (8) Amrita Bazar Pratrika Office Library, (9) Imperial Library, (10) Patna University Library, and (11) Sj. Hemendra Prasad Ghosh's Private Library in Calcutta.

I am specially grateful to Sj. Brajendranath Banerjee, Sj. Mrinal Kanti Ghosh of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, Sj. Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, the

veteran journalist of Calcutta, Dr. Kalidas Nag and Rai Bahadur Khagendranath Mitra of Calcutta University, Dr. S. C. Sircar, Mr. K. K. Dutta, and Principal K. P. Mitra of Patna University, and Mr. P. N. Banerjee, M.A., B.L., Bar.-at-Law and Sjt. Tridibnath Roy, M.A., B.L., of Calcutta High Court for the valuable suggestions they have given and the help they have rendered me in course of my investigations. I am indebted to Mr. J. C. Chakravorti, Registrar, Calcutta University for the kind interest he has taken in the publication of the book within a short time. Mr. A. C. Ghatak, Superintendent, Calcutta University Press, also deserves my sincerest thanks. To Mr. K. P. Das, Head Reader of the Calcutta University Press and to Professors B. K. Mullick and S. C. Sengupta of Patna I am obliged for the help they have given in the reading of proofs.

CONTENTS

PAGES

CHAPTER I

Political Thought of Raja Rammohun Roy	1-77
--	------

CHAPTER II

The Philosophical Radicals	78-155
----------------------------	--------

CHAPTER III

Political Disciples of Raja Rammohun	156-232
--------------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER IV

The Liberal School of Political Thought	233-283
---	---------

CHAPTER V

Critics of the Liberal Thought	284-320
--------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER VI

Political Thought of Sisirkumar Ghosh	321-388
---------------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER VII

The Muslim School of Political Thought	389-401
--	---------

CHAPTER VIII

Political Thought of Bankimchandra	402-473
Appendix	474-493
Bibliography	494-500
Index	501-509

HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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(1821-1884)

VOL. I: BENGAL

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL THOUGHT OF RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY

(1772-1833).

I. The Raja as the Father of Modern Political Movement.

As the history of western political thought practically begins with the name of Aristotle, the history of political thought in modern India begins with the revered name of Raja Rammohun Roy. After a full swing of twenty-three centuries there is a cry in the western world to go back to Aristotle and it is not unlikely that when the nature of political thought of the Raja comes to be correctly appreciated, there may be a movement in modern India to go back to the ideal of the Raja, who in so many fields of social and religious movements is regarded as the true pioneer.

The Raja is known all over the world as the founder of the school of comparative religion, as the great Vedantist who, on the one hand, combated the influence of the Christian missionaries and on the other, laid the foundation of monotheistic revival in India. He is famous as the first advocate of social reform on rational principles, and the pioneer of western education in this country. His social and religious reforms were of such absorbing interest that controversy has ever since raged round those ideas to the exclusion of discussions on his fruitful political thought. In order to understand the political thought of modern India it is absolutely necessary to arrive at a correct understanding of the political ideas of the great reformer.

The Raja was by his culture and temperament essentially a philosopher. The western political thought has received its greatest contribution from philosophers like Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world, from Aquinas and Marsiglio in the middle ages and from Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Bentham and Green in the modern age. India did not suffer from any lack of philosophers in the middle ages, but none of the philosophers from Sankaracharya of the eighth century, to Valadeva Vidyabhushan of the eighteenth interested themselves in political speculation. Political speculation can hardly interest anybody where there is absolutely no guarantee of civil

liberty, where there is scarcely any existence of enlightened public opinion and where politics is thought to be a concern of the prince alone. Such was the condition of India in the middle ages, under the Rajputs and the Mohammedans. The villages enjoyed indeed a large measure of self-government during the Mohammedan rule, but the out-look of the villagers was essentially parochial in nature. On the breakdown of the Mughal system of administration a period of anarchy and disorder followed. The East India Company resolved to stand forth as the Diwan in 1772 indeed, but it took them more than half a century to establish a well-ordered system of government, securing peace and order to their subjects. But from the very beginning of their rule they aimed at securing the enjoyment of civil liberty for their subjects.¹ It is remarkable that the birth of Rammohun in May, 1772, strangely coincides with the first definite declaration of sovereignty by Parliament over the

¹ Rajiblochan Roy in his *Krishnachandra Charita* (pp. 64-74) describes how Krishnachandra and others welcomed the English for their honesty, integrity and impartial justice. The fame of English courts of justice in Calcutta spread even in the interior of Bengal as is evidenced by the use of legal and judicial terms by Ramprasad Sen in his *Padabalis*. See *Ramprasad Granthabali* (Basumati edition), *Padabali* Section.

Company's territories.¹ Thus Rammohun grew up to manhood in an age, when the sense of moral responsibility of the government to the people of India was being slowly but gradually awakened. The people of Bengal enjoyed a limited measure of civil liberty under the ægis of the British Government for nearly half a century (1772-1821), when Rammohun started the Vernacular Journal, *Sambad Kaumudi*, in 1821, to rouse the political consciousness of the people of Bengal.

This was the earliest favourable opportunity which could be availed of to spread political ideas in Bengal. Security of life and property had been ensured in Calcutta, if not in the *mufassil* ; the English language had been picked up by a small number of wealthy citizens, and their ideas had been broadened and liberalised by their intercourse with the English merchants and officials in Calcutta.² A selected band of devoted followers

¹ Mr. Brajendranath Banerjee thinks that there is reason to believe that Rammohun was born in 1774.

² On the history of English Education before the time of Rammohun see Dr. N. N. Law's *Promotion of Learning in India under the Company*; and Winternitz's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Vol. I. An interesting manuscript entitled ' *Shagarf-nama-i-Walayāt* ' written by Itsamuddin Ahmad, an inhabitant of Panchnore in the Nadia district, was exhibited in the Patna session of the Historical Records Commission by Dr. S. C. Sarkar and Prof. K. K. Dutta. This manuscript shows that the author was a

had gathered round Rammohun with a determination to disseminate English education, and to regenerate the country by means of social and religious reforms. Of these the names of Dwarkanath Tagore, Ramanath Tagore, Kaleenath Roy, Boykontonath Roy, Ramchunder Bidyabagish, Hurchunder Ghose, Gowrechurun Bonnerjee, Shibchandra Dev and Tarachand Chuckerverty¹ specially deserve mention as they were closely associated with the Raja in his social, religious, educational and political activities. The names cited above show that the Raja was not a solitary figure in demanding elementary political rights for the people of India.

The Raja was a pioneer in establishing English schools and Vernacular and English journals² in

fluent speaker in English and acted as an interpreter between the Emperor of Delhi and the English in 1765. The manuscript gives an account of his travels in England, whence he came back in 1767.

¹ The Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj, p. 213. Memorial to the Supreme Court, p. 443. References to Raja Rammohun's Works have been given from the Panini Office edition.

² *Asiatic Journal* (1833) informs us that "in 1829, Rammohun became, in conjunction with Dwarkanath Tagore and Neelrutton Haldar, a proprietor of an English newspaper, the *Bengal Herald*." The paper was soon after discontinued. Another paper, entitled the '*Bangaduta*,' written in Bengali and Persian, was started in 1829 under the management of R. Martin, Dwarkanath

Bengal. The number of schools as well as of journals rapidly increased during his life-time and by the time he sailed for England a new generation of Bengali youths had grown up under the influence of these two liberalising agencies. I shall show in a subsequent chapter how far these youngmen represented the radical opinion in India. The following quotations from contemporary papers will show that the Raja was regarded as the pioneer of political movement in India even by his contemporaries. In 1823 Rammohun made a brilliant defence of the freedom of Press in India in his “*Memorial to the Supreme Court*” and “*Appeal to the King in Council.*” He did not live to see the establishment of a free Press in India. But neither the European nor the Indian citizens of Calcutta forgot that it was the effort of the Raja which secured to them the freedom of the Press in 1835. In the Free Press Dinner given to Sir Charles Metcalfe in the Town Hall on the 9th February, 1838, Mr. Leith proposed a toast to “the memory of Rammohun Roy;” and Prasannacoomar Tagore rose as a friend of the late Rammohun Roy to thank the liberator of the Press.¹

Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore and Rammohun Roy. See Bholanath Chandra's *Life of Digambar Mitra*, Vol. I, p. 41.

¹ *Asiatic Journal*, Intelligence, May, 1838.

The written evidence of the Raja on the judicial and revenue systems of India submitted to the authorities in England evoked the following comment from the Serampore Missionaries:—
 “Raja Rammohun Roy is said to have suggested various improvements, such as the Trial by Jury, Native Judicial Assessors, Joint Judges, Regular Public Registers, Codes of Civil and Criminal Law, etc.....Should he be instrumental in securing these advantages to the country, not only the present, but every future age will justly consider him a benefactor to the country.”¹ The editor of the *Bengal Spectator* wrote of Rammohun in 1842: “it is to him that we are in great measure indebted for the concession in regard to the privileges of natives contained in the late Charter (1833).”² The Raja was acknowledged not only in India but also in England as the pioneer in political movement in this country. When various schemes of future government of India were being suggested and discussed in England on the eve of the renewal of the Company’s Charter, a humorous writer published a caricature, entitled “Plans for the government of India—a drama.” In this drama the following plan is put forward by a candidate for Parliament:—“I propose, therefore, in the first place, that Raja

✓¹ *Samachar Darpan*, 24th March, 1832.

✓² *Bengal Spectator*, July, 1842.

Rammohun Roy be appointed Governor-General of India ; that all the judicial posts be filled by Mahomedans,¹ all the revenue offices by Hindoos, and the police be executed by East Indians or Indo-Britons. The beauty of this plan, ladies and gentlemen, consists in this : the Raja is neither a Hindoo, a Mahomedan, nor a Christian, so that he can have no bias towards any part of the population of India; and the rest being antagonistical, that is opposed to each other, they would keep, by their very opposition, the whole machine of government in steady operation, just as an arch is retained firmly together by contrary pressure on all sides of it.”² The pre-eminence of the Raja was recognised even by the authorities of the East India Company. His adopted son was promised a writership by Sir John Hobhouse in 1836.³

¹ The Raja was then in England, and he held that the Mohammedans had better legal training and were more fitted to judicial posts than the Hindus.

² *Asiatic Journal*, 1832, Jan.-April, pp. 281-88.

³ *Calcutta Courier*, May 17, 1836. “ This is the first practical instance, in the Civil Service, of the application of the principle declared in the 87th section of the Charter Act.” S. J. Brajendranath Banerjee has shown that the post was not actually conferred on Rajaram. — *Modern Review*, May, 1926. The nomination of Rajaram to a Bengal writership by the President of the Board of Control was set aside by the Court of Directors.

We find Raja Rammohun Roy fighting vigorously against the corrupt practices in the Hindu religion, against the superstitious and inhuman customs of the Hindu society and against the narrow parochial outlook of Indian mind. But the following quotation from a letter of the Raja will show that behind all his ideas of social and religious reform lay the ideal of bringing about the political regeneration of India. "I regret to say," wrote the Raja in 1828, "that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interest. The distinction of castes, introducing innumerable divisions and subdivisions among them, has entirely deprived them of political feeling, and the multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and the laws of purification have totally disqualified them from understanding any difficult enterprise. It is, I think, necessary that some changes should take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort."¹ Luther and Calvin, the pioneers of the Reformation Movement in the west, did not consciously seek to strengthen the idea of nationality nor to inaugurate democracy, but the earliest prophet of India in the nineteenth century clearly recognised the inter-dependence of political advancement and social and religious

✓¹ Works, pp. 929-30. An attitude taken up by Mr. Gandhi about a century afterwards.

progress. His political programme was intimately and indissolubly connected with the social uplift of the nation.

II. His Method of Investigation.

Broadly speaking, there are two methods of carrying on political investigation. One is concerned with the philosophical examination of the various concepts upon which the whole science of politics rests. Though this method is now scientifically used by investigators, yet throughout the middle ages and even as late as the eighteenth century, most of the European philosophers reasoned by deduction from general dogmas, based upon belief rather than by induction from observation, investigation and experiment. The other method is known as the inductive and historical method. Like Aristotle, Machiavelli, Bodin and Montesquieu, Raja Rammohun Roy followed this method and like them was interested in practical political problems, rather than in general theories concerning the origin and nature of the state. As the political philosophy of Burke is to be gleaned from his various works, so the Raja's political thought is to be gathered by a diligent search of all his works. But while the critical students of Burke are to strain their nerves in reconciling his conflicting ideas and in bringing out a consistent philosophy,

the Raja is eminently consistent throughout and one great idea runs through all the books and pamphlets written by him. His political ideas are to be found mainly in the following writings :—(1) Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females, according to the Hindu Law of Inheritance (1822), (2) Petitions against the Press Regulation to the Supreme Court and to the King in Council (1823), (3) A Letter to Lord Amherst on English Education (1823), (4) Final Appeal to the Christian Public (1823), (5) A Brief Sketch of the Ancient and Modern Boundaries and History of India (1832), (6) Questions and Answers on the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India, etc. (1832), (7) Remarks on Settlement in India by Europeans (1831), and (8) his letters and speeches.

Rammohun appears to have been a diligent student of history.¹ The history of ancient India had not been unearthed by the diligent researches of Orientalists in his time, yet from his familiarity with the old literature of the country he was able to arrive at some broad generalisations regarding the constitutional development of India. He was of opinion that India enjoyed constitutional form of government during the two thousand years

¹ Works, p. 234. The Raja refers to many historical books on modern India.

preceding the Christian era. During these centuries the Brahmans were the law-makers and the Kshatriyas, the administrators. The laws made by the Brahmans were not arbitrary in character, but reflected public opinion. The Brahmans also checked the despotism of the Kshatriyas.¹ But when the Brahmans began to accept offices under the princes, they lost the independence of their character and failed to check the tyranny of the latter. Thus, legislative and executive powers were concentrated in the hands of one, and consequently, despotism ensued. The Rajputs, according to him, “exercised tyranny and oppression for a period of about a thousand years, when Musulmans from Ghaznee and Ghore, invaded the country, and finding it divided among hundreds of petty princes, detested by their respective subjects, conquered them all successively, and introduced their own tyrannical system of government, destroying temples, universities and all other sacred and literary establishments.”² He comes to the conclusion that

¹ ‘Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Right of Females.’—Works, p. 375.

“Freely associating with all the other tribes they (the Brahmans) were thus able to know their sentiments and to appreciate the justice of their complaints, and thereby to lay down such rules as were required, which often induced them to rectify the abuses that were practised by the second tribe.”

² *Ibid.* This statement shows that long before the

despotism was the normal form of government in India.¹ Besides despotism, the Raja thinks that the loss of independence of India was due to several other causes. These were "the dissensions and pusillanimous conduct of the native princes and chiefs ;" "the ignorance existing in the East of the modern improvements in the art of war ;"² "absence of patriotism amongst the people of India;"³ "our excess in civilization and abstinence from the slaughter even of animals, as well as our division into castes, which has been the cause of want of unity among us."⁴ Having diagnosed the causes of downfall of Indians the Raja directed his whole attention to the amelioration of the condition of the people.

Whenever Rammohun advocated a particular reform or pleaded for the recognition of the rights of the people, he appealed to historical experience. He was familiar not only with the ancient and medieval history of India, but also with the history and working of the British Indian

researches of V. A. Smith, there was a tradition of the foreign origin of the Rajputs in India. The Raja's view of the Rajput age as one of feudal tyranny and submergence of the masses of the people is exactly what modern researches have established.

¹ Works, p. 234, 'Preliminary Remarks on Judicial and Revenue Systems of India.'

² *Ibid*, p. 234.

³ *Ibid*, p. 233.

⁴ *Ibid*, *The Brahmanical Magazine*, p. 146.

administration. As Dewan he acquired an intimate knowledge of the judicial and revenue systems of India and as such he was in a position to know the abuses from which the Indians suffered. Rammohun was equally familiar with the history of Europe and America.¹

Raja Rammohun was no visionary. He knew the limitations of his countrymen, he appreciated the benefits of British rule, but he fought like a lion to secure the rule of law in India and to obtain those political rights, the exercise of which he thought the Indians were capable of. "The peasantry and the villagers in the interior are quite ignorant, and indifferent about either the former or present government," wrote the Raja in 1831, "and attributed the protection they might enjoy or oppression they might suffer to the conduct of the public officers immediately presiding over them." "But men of aspiring character and members of such ancient families as are very much reduced by the present system, consider it derogatory to accept the trifling public situations which natives are allowed to hold under the British Government, and are decidedly disaffected to it. Many of those, however, who engage prosperously in commerce, and of those who are secured in the peaceful possession of their estates by the permanent settlement, and such

¹ Works, p. 459.

as have sufficient intelligence to foresee the probability of future improvement which presents itself under the British rulers, are not only reconciled to it, but really view it as a blessing to the country. But I have no hesitation in stating, with reference to the general feeling of the more intelligent part of the Native community that the only course of the policy which can ensure their attachment to any form of government, would be that of making them eligible to gradual promotion, according to their respective abilities and merits, to situations of trust and respectability in the state.”¹ I have made this lengthy quotation to show not only the general drift of the Raja’s political thought but also to evince how true these words stand to-day as they stood a century ago, though changes in degree but not in quality have taken place during the century. Despite the claims of the Swarajists, the masses in India are still steeped in ignorance and are still suffering from political indifferentism, and despite the efforts of the Government “men of aspiring character” are still disaffected towards it. While in 1831 situations of trust and responsibility meant a collectorship or judgeship, to-day it means a governorship or a seat in the Royal Commission. But, I think, the formula of the Raja, including the words “gradual promotion according to their

¹ Works, p. 300.

respective abilities and merits " is sufficiently comprehensive in character.

It will be noticed that in the above quotation there is no claim to "freedom as our birthright," nor any appeal to the so-called "natural rights." The absence of such expressions from the writings of the Raja is all the more surprising, because he was deeply interested in the progress of the second Revolution in France and was certainly acquainted with the American and French Declarations of the Rights. But the philosophical training of the Raja enabled him to steer clear of the revolutionary shibboleths and to realise that it is obligation which confers rights and rights cannot exist apart from the state.

III. Influence of Foreign Writers.

The western political philosophers who seem to have influenced the mind of the Raja were not Rousseau and Thomas Paine, but Montesquieu, Blackstone and Bentham. From Montesquieu's famous treatise on the "Spirit of the Law" (1748), he derived the ideas of the Separation of Powers and of the Rule of Law, both of which points he emphasises again and again in all his writings.¹

¹ The Raja did not learn French till January, 1833 (see his letter to Mr. Woodford, English Works, p. 926), but his best writings in the domain of politics were

Bentham's "Fragment on Government" (1776) and the "Introduction to Morals and Legislation" (1789) had a real hold on the mind of the Raja. "Natural rights," wrote Bentham, "is simple nonsense: natural and imprescriptible rights, rhetorical nonsense—nonsense upon stilts." Such an opinion of the great philosopher might have induced the Raja to reject the theory of natural rights. The influence of Bentham probably led him to insist on the codification of civil and criminal law and to enunciate the principles of such codification. The influence of Bentham, again, might have given him a clear idea of the distinction between law and morality. In the realm of social reform he was clearly influenced by the utilitarian theory. As Bentham held that contribution to the greatest good of the greatest number will justify the summary abrogation of a practice or principle that originated a thousand years ago, so did the Raja write:—"You have at the same time quoted two or three authorities to show, that rites should be performed according to the custom of the country. I reply, female murder, murder of Brahman, parricide and similar heinous crimes, cannot be reckoned amongst pious acts by alleging the custom of a country in their behalf. It is of no consequence

written between 1823 and 1831. As a keen student of international politics he may be presumed to have read Montesquieu from an English translation.

to affirm, that this (Sati) is customary in any particular country; if it were universally practised, the murders would still be criminal." ¹ Bentham's theory of duty of resisting the Government in case the benefit to be secured by it is greater than the evil of revolution, finds an echo in the following sentence of the Raja :—"If mankind are brought into existence, and by nature formed to enjoy the comforts of society and the pleasure of an improved mind, they may be justified in opposing any system, religious, domestic or political, which is inimical to the happiness of society, or calculated to debase the human intellect." ²

In one fundamental matter, however, the Raja differed from the great Utilitarian philosopher. Bentham totally ignored the historical development of a people and assumed that all human beings, irrespective of their race, culture and traditions, are fundamentally the same in their requirements. He was prepared to devise codes for India, Spain, Russia, Morocco and England on one and the same principle." But the Raja never dreamt of

✓ 'Second conference on the practice of burning widows alive.'—Works, p. 353.

² The Raja met Bentham in England and the great philosopher addressed Raja Rammohun as his "intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborateur in the service of mankind."—*Bengal Harukaru*, July 18, 1843.

³ Robert H. Murray, *Studies in the English Social and Political Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 60.

• drawing upon some imaginary universal principles in codifying the laws of India. He was of opinion that "A code of criminal law for India should be founded as far as possible on those principles which are common to, and acknowledged by all the different sects and tribes inhabiting the country."¹ His view was that the code of India should conform to the laws and customs of India and it must not ignore the traditions of the people in its effort to approach universal principles.

The Raja made a careful study of the English constitution. In the period in which he flourished the best and the most authoritative book on the English constitution was Sir William Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England." Blackstone's "Commentaries," however, presented only the legal interpretation of the English constitution to the neglect of the actual working of the system.* Blackstone could not detect in his time the part played by the cabinet. The Raja was a close student of Blackstone,² and as such he insisted on the absolute separation of powers in his scheme for reforming the constitution of India. But it must be noticed that in his demand for codification of the laws of India he rejected the authority of Blackstone and relied on that of

✓ Works, p. 263.

² He quoted Blackstone in his Appendix to the "Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India."—Works, p. 303.

Bentham. Inspired by the principles of the English constitution, the Raja became anxious to secure for his countrymen the same guarantees of individual liberty as were enjoyed by Englishmen. He was the first Indian who imbibed the spirit of the English constitution and demanded civil liberty with all its implications. Fully aware as he was of the limitations of the Indians of his age he never thought of demanding political liberty for them. He was conscious of the ignorance and superstitions that enveloped the minds of his countrymen, who betrayed a deplorable lack of public spirit in their conduct. So he could not think them capable of exercising self-government. The great problem which confronted the well-wishers of India in the first half of the nineteenth century was not autonomy for India but the bare recognition of the principles of justice and security of life and property for the citizens.

IV. The Raja's Love of Liberty.

Raja Rammohun Roy's interest in politics sprang from his love of liberty. He was a passionate lover of liberty in all its forms and especially of freedom of thought. In him were blended the finest thoughts of the eastern and western culture. As a Hindu, he could not but be a devotee of the freedom of thought and of religious toleration. In India, however despotic the monarchs might have been, with a few solitary exceptions, they never

systematically interfered with the expression of thought amongst the people as a matter of political creed. His study of western thoughts and movements confirmed his belief in the value of liberty.¹

His love of liberty had no parochial outlook about it—it embraced the whole world. As in the spiritual world he stood up as the prophet of universal religion, so in the realm of politics, he wanted to see the triumph of the principles of Liberalism everywhere in the world. That there is no inherent antagonism between nationalism and inter-nationalism has been proved by Green and Hobhouse, but Raja Rammohun Roy perceived it early in the nineteenth century, when the idea of nationalism was just coming to the forefront with all the intolerance of a new creed. He believed that Indian Nationalism could gain ground only when the nations of the western world had become free.² The free nations of the world would then find a bond of union in the same principle of

¹ It is noteworthy that the loss of political power is always present before the Raja's mind in any civic discussion on Press, Law, Liberty of the subject, etc. He regarded the various benefits of British rule as a partial compensation for the loss of political power. Apparently the Raja was voicing a general Hindu discontent or disillusionment which later on took the form of the Congress movement.

² This has actually happened.

government.¹ This is why the Raja gave a public dinner at the Town Hall when he heard the news of the establishment of constitutional government in Spain; and became overjoyed on hearing of the success of the second French Revolution. When the constitutional government of Naples was overthrown in 1821, he felt so much grief that he had to cancel an engagement with Mr. Buckingham, the editor of the "*Calcutta Journal*." "From the late unhappy news," wrote the Raja on that occasion, "I am obliged to conclude that I shall not live to see liberty universally restored to the nations of Europe, and Asiatic nations, especially those that are European colonies² possessed of a greater degree of the same blessing than what they now enjoy. Under these circumstances I consider the cause of the Neapolitans as my own, and their enemies, as ours. Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been and never will be ultimately successful."³ This letter explains the cause of his watching the history of the European nations so closely. He believed that if an era of liberalism and nationality dawned upon Europe, the logic of history would carry the liberal movement to India in due course. He could not think of any

¹ Works, pp. 316-17.

² The Raja referred to India sometimes as a Colony of Great Britain and sometimes as a Dependency.

³ Works, p. 923.

possible reconciliation between Democracy in the true sense and Imperialism in the old sense of the term. Hence he suspended his urgent work to see the First Reform Bill carried through the Parliament. After the passing of the Reform Bill he wrote to William Rathbone: "As I publicly avowed that in the event of the Reform Bill being defeated I would renounce my connection with this country (England), I refrained from writing to you or any other friend in Liverpool until I knew the result."¹ This letter reminds us of the alleged determination of Oliver Cromwell to set sail for America in case of defeat of the Grand Remonstrance in the Long Parliament.

V. His Views on Law, Custom and Morality.

In the nineteenth century a war of words was conducted between the Analytical and Historical Schools of Jurisprudence. The former was represented by Austin and the latter by Savigny and Maine. Broadly speaking, the ground of contention between the two schools lay in the question whether the essence of law is the command of the sovereign, or the custom of the people in a community. Austin published his lectures on Jurisprudence in 1832 and the works of Maine were published between 1861 and 1884. Savigny,

¹ Works, p. 925.

the founder of the Historical School of Jurisprudence, published his first work in Germany in 1814, but the Raja probably had no access to his work. Rammohun by his independent thinking arrived at a conclusion, essentially modern in 1830, that is two years before the publication of Austin's famous work. In his "Essay on the Rights of Hindus over Ancestral Property," the Raja says, "In every country, rules determining the rights of succession to, and alienation of, property first originated in the conventional choice of the people, or in the discretion of the highest authority, secular or spiritual, and those rules have been subsequently established by the common usage of the country, and confirmed by judicial proceedings."¹ In this passage lies the essential truth of both the Analytical and Historical Schools of Jurisprudence. Historically speaking, a law might have originated either in the choice of the people or in the command of the sovereign, but in order to stand the test of time it must have been subsequently accepted by the people and enshrined in common usage; while analytically speaking it is the command of the sovereign, when he enforces it through judicial decision. "It is maintained by Austin," says Willoughby, "that a custom becomes a law at the time that it is applied by a court and not before, and this would

¹ Works, p. 394.

seem to us the only logical position to take." It will be seen that the Raja arrived at the true nature of law by means of his forceful intellect even before Austin.

The Raja admitted the right of the supreme authority to make whatever alteration or modification it thought fit;¹ but at the same time he insisted that the long-standing customs of India should not be lightly set aside. If a people had followed a particular custom for centuries in contravention of the authority of some of the sacred writers, the legislators should not attempt to restore the authority of those writers in utter disregard of the long-standing custom of the people. The Raja is of opinion that the people must have found that custom reasonable and "calculated to promote their social interest;" otherwise they would not have followed it for such a long time.²

¹ Works, p. 461, 'Appeal to the King in Council.'

² "But admitting that a Hindu author, an expounder of their law, sin against some of the sacred writers, by withholding a blind submission to their authority, and likewise that the natives of the country have for ages adhered to the rules he has laid down, considering them reasonable, and calculated to promote their social interest, though seemingly at variance with some of the sacred authors; it is those holy personages alone that have a right to avenge themselves upon such expounder and his followers; but no individual of mere secular authority however high, can, I think, justly assume to himself the office of vindicating the sacred fathers, and punishing

Here it should be noted that the Raja would advocate adherence to those customs only which satisfy two important conditions—these must be reasonable and these must conduce to the general welfare of the people. He had not the least hesitation in rejecting any custom which was either unreasonable or injurious. “But I am satisfied that an unjust precedent and practice, even of longer standing, cannot be considered as the standard of justice by an enlightened government.”¹

The Raja made another capital discovery, namely, the distinction between law and morality, before Austin, but the credit of it has been given to the latter. “Austin by establishing the distinction between law and morals,” says Justice Markby, “not only laid the foundation for a science of law, but cleared the conception of law and sovereignty of a number of pernicious consequences to which, in the hands of his predecessors, it has been supposed to lead. Laws as Austin has shown, must be legally binding; and yet a law may be unjust.” In 1830 the Raja published the “Essay on the Rights of Hindoos

spiritual insubordination, by introducing into the existing law an overwhelming change in the attempt to restore obedience.”—“Rights of Hindus over Ancestral Property,” Works, p. 399.

¹ Paper on the Revenue System of India—Works, p. 290.

over ancestral property according to the law of Bengal," and some letters in the *Bengal Harukaru*. In these publications the Raja upheld the right of the father to sell or mortgage the ancestral property without consulting his sons. He maintained that such an absolute ownership of property has been the customary law of Bengal since the time of Jimutabahana, the author of the *Dayabhaga*. Jimutabahana maintained that the

texts of Vyasa exhibiting the prohibition, are intended to show a moral offence; since the family is distressed by a sale or gift or other transfer, which argues a disposition in the person to make an ill use of his power as owner. They are not meant to invalidate the sale or other transfer."¹

In explaining this statement Rammohun clearly enunciated the points of difference between the areas covered by Law and Morality. Some of the moral precepts, according to him, are also legally binding, but all of them are not. Conversely, some of the laws are based on moral principles but not all of them. But an immoral law is as valid and binding as a moral law. Therefore, a law must be obeyed, whether it is moral or not. The Raja makes his point clear by elaborate examples. "So scriptural precepts and prohibitions are sometimes received as morally and legally binding such as Matthew, Ch. V, C. 32,

¹ Dayabhaga, Ch. II, Sect. 28.

prohibiting divorcement of a wife without infidelity on her part; and V. 34, prohibiting oaths of all kinds, obeyed by Quakers, both morally and legally ; but in some instances they are received as inculcating only moral duty, such as V. 42, "From him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away;" and the very prohibition of oath is disregarded by Christians of other denominations, and their administration legally enforced, although some of the most eminent lawyers declare Christianity to be part and parcel of British Law."¹

A writer in the '*Calcutta Quarterly Magazine*,' No. VI, April-June, 1825, wrote in a Review of Sir F. W. McNaghten's Considerations on Hindu Law that any disposal by a father of his ancestral immovables should be nullified, on the principle

¹ Appendix II to Hindu Law of Inheritance—Works, p. 420. The illustrations cited above bear a close resemblance to the remarks made by Lord Henlart, the Lord Chief Justice, in a lecture (March 24, 1930) on the distinction between the fields of morality and of law." "The moralist may say 'Blessed are the pure in heart; but it is inconceivable that a statute should provide that 'After the passing of this Act any person who is not pure in heart shall be guilty of misdemeanour.' Nor would the matter be made any easier if the statute went on to provide that the lack of purity of heart and its symptoms should be defined by a Government Department in rules and orders having the same effect as if they were contained in the Act ;" quoted in Havelock Ellis's "More Essays on Love and Virtue" (1931), p. 110.

that we ought "to make that invalid which is considered immoral." The Raja controverted this absurd proposition with a series of illustrations which not only make the distinction between law and morality quite clear, but also show the high ideal entertained by the Raja about the functions of government. "To permit the sale of intoxicating drugs and spirits, so injurious to health, and even sometimes destructive of life, on the payment of duties publicly levied, is an act highly irreligious and immoral: Is the taxation to be, therefore, rendered invalid and payments stopped? To divide spoils gained in a war commenced in ambition and carried on with cruelty, is an act immoral and irreligious: Is the partition therefore to be considered invalid, and the property to be replaced? To give a daughter in marriage to an unworthy man, on account of his rank or fortune, or other such consideration, is a deed of mean and immoral example: Is the union to be therefore considered invalid, and their children illegitimate? To destroy the life of a fellow-being in a duel, is not only immoral, but is reckoned by many as murder: Is not the practice tacitly admitted to be legal, by the manner in which it is overlooked in courts of justice?.....The question then arises, how shall we draw a line of distinction between those immoral acts that should not be considered invalid, and those that should be

considered invalid, and those that should be regarded as null in the eye of the law ? In answer to this, we must refer to the common law and the established usages of every country, as furnishing the distinctions admitted between the one class and the other.....However, when the author of the Review shall have succeeded in inducing British legislators to adopt his maxim, and declare that the validity of every act shall be determined by its consistence with morality, we may then listen to his suggestion, for applying the same rule to the Bengal Law of Inheritance.'¹ It must be admitted that Raja Rammohun's theory about the spheres of law and morality is much more explicit than the utilitarian doctrine of Bentham, who only emphasised that the existence of a law is no justification of it, unless it agrees with the greatest good of the greatest number.

VI. *Law and Public Opinion in India.*

Before the renewal of the Charter in 1833 there prevailed a good deal of confusion regarding the authority as well as the machinery for making law in India. Laws were then known as Regulations and there were three classes of Regulations. The first were the Rules, Ordinances, and Regulations passed by Government under the 37th

¹ Works, p. 409.

Section of the Act of 13 George III (The Regulating Act) for the good order and government of the settlement of Fort William. Such Regulations were not valid until registered by the Supreme Court. They were then sent to England, and exhibited at the India House. Within sixty days from their being so exhibited, any party could appeal against them. The King might likewise disallow such Regulations within two years from the making thereof. The second class of Regulations were those which related to the government of places outside Calcutta and were known as Rules and Regulations for the provinces. The power of enacting such Regulations was first conferred on the Government by Act of Parliament in 1781. This Act also empowered the authorities in England to disapprove of those Regulations if they saw fit. The third class of Regulations had reference¹ to the imposition of taxes and duties by the Governor, and they were not valid until approved by the Court of Directors and Board of Commissioners.

The Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company (1832) discussed with various witnesses the problem of simplifying the procedure of law-making in India. Broadly speaking, there were two schools of opinion regarding the legislative authority of India. One school, represented by John Sullivan,¹ the Madras civilian, Captain

¹ Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select

T. Macan¹ and B. Scutt-Jones,² the Assistant Secretary of the India Board, held that India must be governed in India through a legislative council. The other school represented by the Right Hon. T. P. Courtenay, M. P.,³ and Peter Auber, formerly Secretary to the Government of India and author of "An Analysis of Indian Government," maintained that the British Parliament should continue to be the supreme legislative authority over India as India had not arrived at a situation to legislate for herself and "till that period arrives, it is, I conceive, our duty to legislate for her." (Peter Auber, Q. 1540.) The latter school objected to the vesting of legislative authority in India Government because they thought that the legislative function could not be satisfactorily performed by a legislative council and because they were not prepared to withdraw from King's English subjects the benefits of the English law.⁴

Raja Rammohun Roy too protested against the plan of vesting legislative authority in the hands of the India Government. But his grounds of objection were quite different from those held by Peter Auber and T. P. Courtenay. From the

Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, Vol. I, Public, p. 615.

¹ *Ibid*, q. 1467.

² *Ibid*, q. 266.

³ *Ibid*, q. 1608.

⁴ Rt. Hon. T. P. Courtenay's Evidence, q. 1608.

study of political philosophy, and especially of the works of Bentham, the Raja must have learnt that laws are the commands of the supreme governor or the sovereign. His intellect was sharp enough to detect that the Governor-General, inspite of his high-sounding title, was not the supreme ruler. The sovereign power over India is the King-in-Parliament. So the Raja demanded that the laws for India should be made by the King-in-Parliament. Apart from philosophical convictions he entertained a very high idea of disinterestedness and philanthropy of the public men of England. Moreover, the Raja was a fine Greek scholar and from his study of Plato he might have drawn the idea that Law is the expression of Reason without passion. This high ideal of Law led him to oppose any assumption of legislative authority by any servant of the East India Company, however high and exalted his position might be. "If upon representations being made by the local authorities in the country, Your Majesty after due investigation had been pleased with the advice of the high council of the realm to order the abolition of the liberty of the Press in India," wrote the Raja in his memorable petition to the King-in-Council, "Your Majesty's faithful subjects from the feeling of respect and loyalty due to the supreme legislative power, would have patiently submitted, since although they would in that case, still have lost one of their

precious privileges, yet their claim to the superintendence and protection of the highest legislative authority, in whom your faithful subjects have unbounded confidence, would still have remained unshaken ; but were this Rule and Ordinances of the local Government to be held valid, and thus remain as a precedent for similar proceedings in future, your faithful subjects would find their hope of protection from the Supreme Government cut off, and all their civil and religious rights placed entirely at the mercy of such individuals as may be sent from England to assume the executive authority in this country, or rise into power through the routine of office, and who from long officiating in an inferior station may have contracted prejudices against individuals or classes of men, which ought not to find shelter in the breasts of the Legislator.' ' ¹ More than a century has rolled on since the Raja expressed his desire to be ruled by laws framed in England. Such an opinion would seem to many to-day to be a crude absurdity. But the theory of separation of powers was such a cardinal principle in the political ideal of the Raja that he was prepared to go any length to secure its observance. He believed that if a legislative council were established in India, it would be dominated by the executive authority ; and that the executive could never rise above

¹ Works, p. 461.

passion or prejudice against a class or a sect. Hence he thought it better to rely on the enlightened public opinion of England than to be governed by a bureaucratic legislature. Could he have been sure of the success of representative system in India he would certainly have welcomed the idea of an Indian Legislature.

Another point of interest in this connection is the question whether the Raja was in favour of the assumption of immediate control of India by the Crown. The passage quoted above shows that he wanted laws to be ultimately passed by Parliament. Does this show that he liked to see the power of the Company at an end? His private secretary, Mr. Arnot,¹ tells us that he had no such idea. "He stood up firmly against the proposals of his more radical friends," writes Mr. Arnot, "for exchanging the East India Company's rule for a colonial form of Government. His argument was, that in all matters connected with the colonies, he had found, from long observation, that the Minister was absolute, and the majority of the House of Commons subservient; there being no body of persons there who had any adequate motives to thwart the Government in regard to

¹ An article on the Raja, purported to have been written by a "friend" of Rammohun was published in the *Asiatic Journal* of Sept.-Dec., 1833. The January-April issue of 1835 of the same journal informs us that the article was written by Mr. Arnot.

distant dependencies of the British Crown. The change proposed was, therefore, in his estimation, a change from a limited government, presenting a variety of efficient checks on any abuse of its power, for an absolute despotism.”¹ It is quite easy to believe that Rammohun, as the student of Blackstone, laid emphasis on constitutional checks and balances. The statement of the Raja on the judicial system of India before the Select Committee further shows that he was in favour of the double government of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. In advocating legislation by the authorities in England instead of by Government in India he wrote :—“ As the affairs of India have been known to the authorities in Europe, for such a series of years, in matters of legislation, the local government should be bound to carry into effect any regulations or order in judicial and revenue matters sent out, formally enacted by the *British Government, or the Court of Directors* under the express sanction of the Board of Commissioners for the control of the affairs of India, although the local government might still remonstrate against them to the home authorities.”²

But the Raja was aware of the inherent difficulty of making law from England for a

¹ *Asiatic Journal*, Sept.-Dec., 1833, p. 212.

² *Works*, p. 267.

distant country, in an age when rapid communication was not feasible. He suggested three methods of far-reaching consequences for ensuring good laws for India. The first and foremost is the free Press. He adduced four different arguments to show that freedom of the Press was necessary for making good laws for India. First, the public should have the power of placing before the Government their opinion on matters affecting the general interest of the community. The Government should have some means of knowing the sentiment of the people. Freedom of the Press would make laws correspond to public opinion.¹ Secondly, the people would be able to ventilate their grievances through the Press and try to have them redressed. If grievances remain unrepresented and unredressed they might cause revolution. But the Free Press would obviate such a danger.² Thirdly, freedom of the Press would enable the people of India to appeal to the honour and justice of the British nation against any possible oppressive and tyrannical act of India Government.³ Fourthly, it would enable the Court of Directors to ascertain correctly “whether the systems introduced in their possessions, prove so beneficial to the natives of the country, as their authors might fondly suppose

¹ Appeal to the King in Council, para. 29—Works, . 456.

² *Ibid*, para. 31—Works, p. 457.

³ *Ibid*, para. 33—Works, p. 458.

or would have others believe, and whether the Rules and Regulations which may appear excellent in their eyes, are strictly put in practice.¹ Raja Rammohun's forceful arguments might have convinced even some of the high Government officials in India. Mr. Holt Mackenzie, serving as the Secretary to Government in the Territorial Department between 1816 and 1830 and also as a member of the College Council (and hence in touch with the Raja) and of the Committee of Public Instruction for a considerable time, appears to have echoed the views of the Raja in his answers to the questions of the Select Committee in 1832. He held that the discussion of laws by Indians through the means of the public Press would give them a right to exercise judgment in matters of legislation, but it would not entail any danger to the British power in India.² The second method suggested by the Raja for securing good laws for India was the appointment of commissions of inquiry from time to time. Thus writes the Raja : " Your Majesty's faithful subjects are aware of no means by which impartial information on these subjects (that is, the ascertaining of the real value of the systems introduced in India) can be obtained by the Court of Directors or other authorities in England, except in one of the following modes :

¹ *Ibid.*, para. 46—Works, p. 464.

² Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee (1832), Vol. I, Public, qs. 839-842.

either, first, by the existing of a Free Press in this country and the establishment of Newspapers in the different Districts under the special patronage of the Court of Directors and subject to the control of law only, or secondly by the appointment of a commission composed of gentlemen of intelligence and respectability, totally unconnected with the Governing Body in this country, which may, from time to time, investigate on the spot, the condition of Your Majesty's faithful subjects, and judge with their own eyes regarding the operation of the systems of law and jurisprudence under which they live." ¹ Of these two methods the Raja preferred the Free Press to the Commission as the latter would entail great labour and expenses and as "the publication of truth and the natural expression of men's sentiments through the medium of the Press, entail no burden on the state." ²

The third method which the Raja suggested for facilitating the task of Parliament in making good laws for India was to ascertain the opinion of the aristocracy of wealth and intellect in India regarding any proposed law. In Bengal all the public functionaries in the interior of the country had by a specific enactment the privilege of suggesting any new laws and regulations that might

¹ Works, p. 464.

² This is the first demand by Indians for a commission of enquiry.

appear to them expedient. These suggestions were taken into consideration by the Governor-General in Council, and if approved, a Regulation was framed accordingly.¹ Rammohun's proposal was that not only the public functionaries but also the intelligent and wealthy members of the public should be consulted before making any law. "With this view every such project of law before it is finally adopted by the Government, should be printed and a copy sent directly from government not only to the judges of the Indian Dewany Adalat and the members of the Board of Revenue, etc., but also to the advocate-general on the part of the honourable Company, the principal Zamin-dars such as the Rajas of Burdwan, Bihar, Benares, etc., and to the highly respectable merchants such as Jagat Set at Murshidabad, Babu Baijnath at Patna and the representatives of Babu Manohar Das at Benares, also to the Muftis of Sadar Dewani Adalat, and the head native officers of the Boards of Revenue, for their opinion on each clause of the Regulation to be sent in writing within a certain period. Because these being the persons who are affected by the Regulations, they will be cautious of recommending any that is injurious. It should still be optional, however, with government to be guided or not by

¹ Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee (1832), q. 1722.

their suggestions.”¹ But the Raja would not vest the final authority in the hands of the Indian Government. He proposed that the proposal of the Government along with the observations made by the parties mentioned above should be sent for consideration to the Court of Directors and Parliament. A standing committee of the House of Commons should scrutinise all these and report to the House for their amendment and confirmation. Thus according to Rammohun, the power of initiative should belong to the Indian Government, that of criticism to the Indian public and officials, and the power of enacting laws to the British Parliament. It may be noted here that James Mill, the disciple of Bentham and the historian of India, also desired that the supreme authority in making, amending or repealing laws should be vested, in Parliament.²

The abovementioned suggestion of the Raja for eliciting the opinion of the public on any proposed measure of legislation seems to be hopelessly antiquated. He thought that laws or regulations, as they were called at that period, affect only the Zamindars, merchants and officials. The idea that laws affect as much the humblest of the citizens as the highest and that every adult and sane member of the community should have a

¹ Works, p. 266.

² Minutes of Evidence, *op. cit.*, q. 346.

voice in the making of laws, did not then find acceptance in any state in the world. Some Philosophical Radicals like Bentham were demanding universal suffrage indeed, but their proposals were treated as Utopian ideals. Rammohun was not a Utopian idealist and as such in the then state of the country he could not demand full-fledged representative and responsible government. In suggesting that the aristocracy of wealth and intellect alone should criticise bills, he showed indeed some bias for an aristocratic form of government. But his sympathy for constitutional government in every part of Europe, especially for the First Reform Bill in England, proves that he had a firm faith in democracy. Here he was dealing with practical affairs as a practical statesman. He could not forget for a moment that India was a dependency and not a free country, neither could he convince himself of the existence of an active public opinion and intense patriotic sentiment in India. In the absence of public opinion he thought it useless to demand a legislative council in India.

Many other witnesses before the Select Committee, however, thought that India should have a legislative council with one or more Indian members in it. James Mill proposed a legislative council, consisting of a person well acquainted with the laws of England, one or more of the most experienced of the Company's

servants, an Indian of the highest character and qualifications, and a philosopher, "capable of bringing to the great work the aid of general principles." All the members, of course, would be nominated and the legislature must be strictly and completely under the control of the British Parliament.¹ According to John Sullivan the legislative council should be composed of the Governor-General as president, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as vice-president, the members of the executive council of the Governor-General, and one or perhaps more of the present judges of the Supreme Court, with the ministerial officers of the Government, and two or three Indians of rank and character. He was of opinion that the selection of the members should be left in the hands of the authorities in England.² Holt Mackenzie suggested that the legislative council should consist of the Governor-General and his Council, the Judges of the Supreme Court, the Lieutenant-Governors and their Secretaries; the chief public functionaries, judicial and revenue, with some military officers, and gentlemen out of service, including Indians, to be appointed by the Governor-General.³ The opinion of A. D. Campbell, formerly Secretary to the Board of Revenue and Magistrate, was somewhat similar

¹ *Op. cit.*, q. 345-49.

² *Ibid*, q. 617-19.

³ *Ibid*, q. 822.

to that expressed by Rammohun. He desired that the local government should select both Indians and Europeans to furnish their opinions, in writing, on the laws, and to suggest such new laws as they might consider expedient. "I say in writing because I would include so numerous a body of the local functionaries, as well as others, that it might be impossible without putting a stop to the details of civil government to congregate the whole together at one place. Independently of these local members, other natives and Europeans might be selected from each of the presidencies to attend the Governor-General, in whom the legislative authority should centre." ¹ Mr. Campbell, however, hit upon the real difficulty in including Indian members in the legislative council in the following words :—"The natives unaccustomed to such a situation, will at first feel much at a loss to collect the opinions of their countrymen ; and unless a popular selection is made, the people, accustomed as they are to represent all their grievances to the local European officers, will be inclined to place more confidence in them than even in their own countrymen, unless they have a voice in their nominations, or they are known to them personally or by repute." ²

Rammohun knew that if any legislative council were established in India, the executive and the

judicial officers would have the preponderant voice in it, and the inclusion of one or two Indian nominated members would not obviate the danger—an unreasonably great danger was it to him—of uniting the executive, judicial and legislative power in one body. Such a consideration might have induced him to eschew all idea of a legislative council in India and to propose the extremely moderate scheme of consulting a few leading citizens of India. But, not to speak of the inclusion of Indians in the legislative council, even this moderate proposal of the Raja was not accepted by the authorities in England. It is curious to note, however, that to a certain section of Englishmen, the necessity of consulting Indian opinion in making laws for India appeared to be so great that Mr. Hume brought forward a motion in Parliament in August, 1831, for giving four representatives to British India in Parliament. His scheme was that Calcutta, Bombay and Madras should each send one member, and Singapore, Malacca and Prince of Wales Island one. He estimated 23,000 Whites and 625,000 Indians in Calcutta and its neighbourhood. All who were entitled to sit as jurors were to be entitled to vote. But this proposal was greeted with laughter in the Commons.¹

¹ *Samachar Darpan*, January 7, 1832.

VII. Civil Liberty and the Rule of Law.

Every modern state guarantees, through its public law, some particular rights known as civil rights or civil liberty, to its citizens against the interference of the government. Rammohun knew that these rights are not inherent in man and these can exist only in a democratically organised state. But at the same time he was perfectly aware of the fact that India was neither a sovereign state nor a democracy. Under these circumstances the people of India could hardly enjoy any civil liberty. Yet the Raja held that the Indians “are fortunately placed by Providence under the protection of the whole British Nation, or that the King of England and his Lords and Commons are their Legislators, and that they are secured in the enjoyment of the same civil and religious privileges that every Briton is entitled to in England.”¹ He did not formally discuss what these specific rights or privileges were, but by implication he made it quite clear that he understood by civil liberty, the right of life and liberty, the right of property, freedom of opinion, and freedom of religious worship.² We know that

¹ Memorial to the Supreme Court ; Works, p. 442.

² Appeal to the King in Council ; Works, p. 446 : “Natives of Bengal.....remained during the whole period of the Muhammadan conquest faithful to the existing Government, although their property, was often

Rammohun was a warm admirer of the British Government in India. His appreciation of the British rule was due to the realisation of the fact that the English people delivered the Indians from the tyranny of their former rulers, under whom the people were never secure in the enjoyment of civil rights. He concluded his "Final Appeal to the Christian Public" by thanking "the Supreme Disposer of the Universe, for having unexpectedly delivered this country, from the long continued tyranny of its former Rulers, and placed it under the Government of the English, a nation who not only are blessed with the enjoyment of civil and political liberty, but also interest themselves in promoting liberty and social happiness, as well as free inquiry into literary and religious subjects, among those nations to which that influence extends."¹ The Raja in his appeal to the King in Council drew attention to the fact that under the Mohammedan rule the Hindus enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussulmans,² being eligible to the highest offices in the state, entrusted with the command of armies and the government of provinces and

plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood wantonly shed."

¹ Works, p. 874.

² The Raja's remarks are true only with reference to the Mughal Government, but certainly incorrect with regard to the Sultanate of Delhi.

often chosen as advisers to their Prince. But under the East India Company Indians were compensated for the loss of those privileges by the more secure enjoyment of civil and religious rights. "Notwithstanding the loss of political rank and power," observed the Raja, "they considered themselves much happier in the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty than were their ancestors." But the Raja demanded again and again that these rights should be securely maintained by the British Government, otherwise "the basis on which they have founded their hopes of comfort and happiness under the British Power, will be destroyed." Rammohun Roy suggested some reforms, by which the civil rights might be effectively secured to the people of India. For securing life and liberty he demanded codification of law, separation of powers, integrity, efficiency and independence of judges, introduction of the jury system and the Habeas Corpus Act, and the legal responsibility of officials. He held that the civil and criminal laws should be codified in such a way as not to require any explanation by a reference to any other books of authority, either Mohammedan or Christian.¹ Separation of powers was to him the cardinal principle of good government; he was so much obsessed with Montesquieu's doctrine that he could not think of any case where the union of

powers might be required to ensure efficient administration. According to him, neither the Governor General nor any of the civil servants of the Company should be allowed to issue Regulations and Ordinances.¹ He strongly protested against the union of magisterial and judicial power with the office of the Collector.² "In every civilised country," observed the Raja, "rules and codes are found proceeding from one authority, and their execution left to another. Experience shows that unchecked power often leads the best men wrong and produces general mischief."

The judicial administration in India was held in low repute throughout the period of the Company's rule.³ Rammohun suggested various reforms for bringing about purity in the administration of justice.⁴ One of the reforms suggested by him was the "superintendence of public opinion." His idea was that the people

¹ Works, p. 448.

² "Contrary to the judicious system established by Lord Cornwallis, and to the common principles of justice as they (the collectors) thus became at once parties and judges in their own case, consequently such powers very often prove injurious to those who attempt to maintain their own right against the claims of government, whose agents the collectors are."—Works, p. 283.

³ L. S. S. O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service* (1601-1930), 1931, p. 64.

⁴ *Judicial System of India*; Works, pp. 246-49.

were to watch the judicial proceedings and to see that the judges followed the principles of law and equity. Every person who chose should have a right to be present during the trial of causes in any court, and to make notes of cases decided, and publish them in any manner he might think proper for general information. He was aware of the fact that this right might be abused by evil-minded persons through misrepresentation of the case. He suggested that if such wilful misrepresentation were judicially established before a competent tribunal, the man should be punished.

Apart from the ignorance of judges about the vernacular of litigants, the want of public supervision of judicial proceedings, and the insufficiency of the number of judges, the course of justice was vitiated by the wide prevalence of perjury and forgery among the litigants. The sovereign remedy of these evils was, according to Rammohun, the remodelling of the old Panchayet system. He found that the Panchayet system in Bengal was very defective. The Panchayet was not guarded against private influence or partiality, was not regular in its sittings and had no power to compel the attendance of witnesses. His plan of reviving the Panchayet system, however, bore a distinct bias for centralisation and was diametrically opposed to the course which has been recently adopted by the various Village Self-government Acts. His plan was to use the old system as the basis of the trial by

jury.¹ According to him, three, five or a greater number of respectable Indians should be selected as jurors. Three times the number required for sitting on a trial should be summoned, and the persons actually to serve should be taken by lot, so that neither the judges nor the parties might be able to know beforehand what persons would sit

¹ Works, pp. 250-51.

The President of the Board of Control proposed to introduce a bill rendering Indians eligible for appointment as Justices of Peace and to sit on Grand Jury as well as Petit Jury. The Directors of the E. I. Co. pointed out certain objections to the proposed bill in a letter, dated the 8th December, 1831. Raja Rammohun Roy proved the fitness of Indians in a communication to the Board of Control. One of the main grounds for the objection of the Directors was that Indians, if appointed jurors, would sit in judgment over Europeans. The Raja answered the objection thus:—"It lies with every Government to establish and preserve a community of feeling, interest and habitude, among the various classes of its subjects by treating them all as one great family without showing an invidious preference to any particular tribe or sect, but giving fair and equal encouragement to the worthy and intelligent under whatever denomination they may be found. But by pursuing a contrary plan, for 'community of feeling' will of course be substituted 'religious jealousy' for community of interest, a spirit of domination or ascendancy on the one hand, of hatred and revenge on the other; and lastly, for 'community of habitude' will be established a broad line of demarcation and separation even in conducting public business."

India Gazette, January 28, 1833.

on the trial of a cause. The European judge at the station (Zillah or city) should keep a list of persons qualified to serve as jurors. Cases should be conducted in vernacular, so that the jury might understand the proceedings. Publicity should be as much fostered as possible, and the jury should be kept apart and required to decide without separating. A European Judge should be present to maintain order and an Indian Judge to guard against any private influence. Where judge and jury were unanimous, no appeal should be permitted. He thought that "it is the only system by which present abuses consisting of perjury, forgery and corruption can be removed." Rammohun never dreamt of reviving the old system of local self-government, in which every village maintained through its Panchayet peace and order and got its cases decided locally. He desired above all purity of judicial administration, and his experience of village life in Bengal warned him not to rely on the old type of village Panchayet for the maintenance of justice. It should be noted, however, that he believed that it was only by the co-operation and vigilance of the people and the association of Indian functionaries with the European judges that fair and impartial justice can be secured.

He desired that the judges of the Sudder Dewany Adawlut should have the power of issuing the writ of Habeas Corpus according to the practice

of the English courts. To protect the citizens of the Mofussils from illegal arrest and imprisonment he suggested that one of the circuit judges should investigate such cases and report to the Sudder Dewany Adawlut.¹

The Raja also emphasised the necessity of enforcing responsibility of every action of an officer in his official capacity through judicial proceedings. “The Judges of Circuit should also be required to keep a vigilant watch over the proceedings of the magistrates within his jurisdiction, and to institute an investigation personally and on the spot, into any complaint preferred against them, whenever he sees sufficient ground for adopting this prompt measure.”² Similarly, the assistant judge, according to the Raja, should be authorised to “receive written complaints of any abuse of their power from persons who feel themselves oppressed by the police.”³ He suggested various other practical reforms for securing fair justice. He proposed that the Sudder Ameens should be stationed at proportionate distances in different parts of the district, so that suitors might not have to travel far from their homes to file their bills and afterwards to seek and obtain justice.⁴ This reform has been subsequently

¹ Judicial System; Works, p. 253.

² *Ibid*, p. 262.

³ *Ibid*, p. 249.

⁴ Judicial System of India ; Works, p. 248.

introduced. To secure purity of judicial administration, he also demanded that the salary of Indian officers in the judicial department should be substantially increased.¹ For the same reason he was against the proposal of reducing the salary of the European judges.² Thus it will be seen that the Raja, unlike the nationalists of the present day, thought that fair and efficient administration could be secured in a country like India, where the majority of the people are ignorant, and consequently the temptation to be corrupt is great on the part of the officers, only by paying high salary to both the Indian and the European officers.

Rammohun was an adherent of the doctrine of equality before the eye of law indeed, but in one particular case he was ready to allow some departure from it. He thought it expedient for Government to order persons of high rank to be tried by a special commission, composed of three or more persons of the same rank.³

Rammohun held that the security of property is one of the fundamental rights of the subjects. In his "Letters on the Hindu Law of Inheritance," he derided the opinion of "A Hindu" that "All subjects are dependent, the King alone is free." He remarked, "I trust your learned

¹ Judicial System of India ; Works, p. 245.

² *Ibid*, p. 268.

³ *Ibid*, p. 263.

correspondent does not mean, by the above text, to establish that all subjects have a dependent right in their lawful possessions, and that the King is privileged to take or give them away at his pleasure." Here the Raja hinted that the right of property is inviolable even against the government.

Rammohun was a staunch adherent of the doctrine of religious toleration. One of the reasons which led him to welcome British rule in India was the policy of religious toleration, advocated by the English. Like Locke, Rammohun held that the State should not interfere with the subjects in religious affairs. He gave expression to his views on religious liberty in his characteristic manner : " True Religion needs not the aid of the sword or the legal penalties for its protection." ¹ He emphasised the necessity of maintaining religious toleration by the Government of India especially because the conquerors had always scoffed at the religion of the conquered and had tried to impose their religion on the subject-people. He cited the examples of the Greeks and the Romans, who being idolaters themselves, mocked at the monotheistic religion of the Jews. He hoped that the English would not follow the example of the conquerors of the past. He protested against the method of preaching adopted by the Christian

¹ Appeal to the King in Council; Works, p. 454.

missionaries in the following words :—“ To introduce a religion by means of abuse and insult, or by affording the hope of worldly gain, is inconsistent with reason and justice. If by the force of argument they can prove the truth of their own religion and the falsity of that of Hindus, many would of course embrace their doctrines, and in case they fail to prove this, they should not undergo such useless trouble, nor tease Hindus any longer by their attempt at conversion.” ¹

VIII. *Freedom of the Press.*

Rammohun attached the greatest importance to the right of expressing one's opinion freely. His Memorial to the Supreme Court and Appeal to the King in Council regarding the freedom of the Press are regarded as “ the Areopagitica of Indian History.” Like Milton, he drew upon History as well as the broad principles of Political Science to show that the freedom of the Press is as beneficial to the governed as to the government. Like Milton, Rammohun shows that whatever is of highest excellence in government, or of greatest virtue and enlightenment in society, can be secured only by the freedom of the Press ; while licensing and tyranny of opinion have always gone hand in hand with bad government. But it must be admitted that Milton's work covers a much wider

✓ *The Brahmanical Magazine; Works, p. 146.*

ground than that of Rammohun. Milton raised his noble voice on behalf of the freedom of mind itself,¹ because he had to contend against the licensing of all kinds of publications. Rammohun's advocacy was only on behalf of a particular kind of publication, namely the periodical publication; because the Bengal Government's Regulation of 1823 aimed at restricting not all kinds of publications, but only the periodical Press.

Rammohun claimed that the Indian subjects of His Majesty had enjoyed the liberty of the Press "for so many years since the establishment of the British Rule."² This statement is true only in the sense that there was no periodical Press owned and managed by Indians before 1816 and consequently there was no necessity for restricting it; and even when the Indian periodicals came into existence it was found impossible to enforce the restriction against it. Otherwise, a general restriction against the Press had begun to be imposed as early as 1791 in Bombay and 1799 in Madras and Bengal.³ In 1818, during the administration of

¹ "Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye." *Areopagitica*; Milton's Prose Works (Bohn's Libraries), Vol. II, p. 55.

² Appeal to the King in Council, para. 39.

³ Papers relating to the Public Press in India (1858), pp. 4 and 24. In 1799 the Bengal Government

Lord Hastings censorship of the Press was abolished in Bengal.¹ The Court of Directors did not like to sanction this change. In the draft of a despatch the Court remarked : "After the fullest consideration which we have been able to give to the subject, it is our decided conviction that neither the Government, nor the public, nor the editors, will benefit from the change." This draft was sent up officially to the India Office for the sanction of the Board of Commissioners, on the 7th April, 1820 ; but the draft was never returned by the Board, nor any communication respecting it was sent to the Court. So the Court of Directors could not prevent the Governments of Bengal and Bombay from giving considerable freedom to the Press in India.

issued the following regulations for the public Press :

(1) Every printer of newspaper to print his name at the bottom of the paper.

(2) Every editor and proprietor of a paper to deliver in his name and place of abode to the Secretary to Government.

(3) No paper to be published on a Sunday.

(4) No paper to be published at all until it shall have been previously inspected by the Secretary to the Government, or by a person authorised by him for that purpose.

(5) The penalty for offending against any of the above regulations to be immediate embarkation for Europe.

✓ ' An Early Chapter of the Press in Bengal ' by Mr. Brajendranath Banerjee, published in *Modern Review*, November, 1928.

The Court of Directors made another attempt to put severer restrictions on the Press in India on the 17th January, 1823, when they addressed a long despatch to the Right Honourable Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, praying for a new Act of Parliament to enlarge the powers of the Indian Governments for checking the abuses of the Press. In this despatch they made the following suggestion : “were the Local Governments empowered to grant and withdraw licenses to printing presses, and to put down any press printing without a license, such a check would be universally applicable, and would even supersede the necessity of the censorship.” This letter was considered by the ministers who, however, refused to submit to Parliament any measure for extending the authority of the provincial Governments.¹

Rammohun thought that by issuing the Regulation for licensed Press on the 14th March, 1823, “the local executive authorities suddenly assumed the power of legislation in matters of the highest moment.” He prayed to the King in Council to prohibit any authority in India from assuming the legislative power.² But from the tenor of the correspondence, cited above, it appears that the idea of requiring license from the Press, occurred

¹ Papers relating to the Public Press in India (ordered by the House of Commons, to be printed, 4th May, 1858), pp. 25-26.

² Appeal to the King in Council, para. 54.

first to the Directors and it is quite likely that Mr. John Adam, the acting Governor General, issued the regulation at their suggestion.

Rammohun Roy could not have been aware of the suggestion regarding the licensing of the Press, made by the Directors. Yet he answered everyone of the objections that could have been raised and were actually raised by the Directors, against the freedom of the Press. The Directors held that 'a free Press is a fit associate and necessary appendage of a representative constitution;' and as the Government of India can in no sense be called a representative or a popular Government, there should be no freedom of Press in India. Rammohun showed that as the Government of India was not representative, it was all the more necessary to have freedom of discussion. A free Press would prove to be the most excellent channel of information to the supreme 'authorities in England.'¹ "While men can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of the local authorities to the Supreme Government, and thus get them redressed, the grounds of discontent that excite revolution are removed."² He asserts, therefore, that a free Press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world. On the other hand, revolutions had frequently shaken the

¹ Appeal to the King in Council, para. 46.

² *Ibid.*, para. 31.

foundation of those despotic governments which had tried to keep the people in ignorance. He illustrates his remark by the following historical examples: "Notwithstanding the tyranny and oppression of Gengis Khan and Tamerlane, their empire was not so lasting as that of the Romans, who to the proud title of conquerors, added the more glorious one of Enlighteners of the world."¹ Moreover, 'a Government conscious of rectitude of intention, cannot be afraid of public scrutiny by means of a Press.'

The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Court of Directors asserted² that 'in India public opinion cannot be said to exist,' and that the executive officers of the Government of India are ultimately responsible to the public opinion in England; hence discussions should take place in England and not in India. Rammohun held that there was a number of enlightened people in India and that if freedom of discussion were allowed, they could explain to the public the excellence of the system of government established by the British in India.

The Directors were of opinion that the free Press, by discussing the conduct of the administrators, would diminish respect for authority.³ The Raja quoted the conclusion of his 'Final Appeal

¹ *Ibid*, paras. 31, 35 and 36.

² Papers relating to the Public Press in India, p. 20.

³ *Ibid*, p. 21.

to the Christian Public ' and some remarks of the *Friend of India* to show that free discussions had not brought hatred and contempt upon the government. He further asserted that free discussions enhance the prestige and popularity of the government. He also held that public conduct of public men should not pass unnoticed.¹

The Directors were of opinion that the newspapers and other periodicals were not the best vehicles of conveying instruction ; and that their general aim was to gratify the curiosity rather than to enlighten understanding. The Raja asserted, on the other hand, that the four vernacular newspapers had, by introducing free discussion, diffused knowledge, improved the minds and ameliorated the condition of the people.² Further, he brought to the notice of the King in Council that in the past high offices had been open to the people and 'for securing them people tried to improve their mind; but now in the absence of such an incentive the liberty of

¹ James Sutherland in his evidence before the Select Committee said that free discussion in the Press had acted as a check on the conduct of public functionaries and occasionally led to very useful investigations (q. 1149). Holt Mackenzie said that free discussion would contribute to the stability of the Government, if it resulted in securing better laws (q. 846).—Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee (Public), 1832.

² Memorial to the Supreme Court ; Works, p. 440.

the Press alone could bring them distinction in the world of letters.

The Directors thought that free discussions in newspapers might goad on the sepoys to revolt. Mr. Elphinstone observed in 1832 that, " In other countries, the use of the press has gradually extended along with the improvements of the government and the intelligence of the people; but we shall have to contend at once with the most refined theories of Europe, and with the prejudices and fanaticism of Asia, both rendered doubly formidable by the imperfect education of those to whom every appeal will be addressed. Is it possible that a foreign government, avowedly maintained by the sword, can long keep its ground in such circumstances ? " ¹ Rammohun took great pains to prove that the loyalty of the people of India to the British Government was deep and unshakable. As proofs of loyalty he said that the people entrusted Government with their money, while under previous governments they had buried their riches under the ground, that the landlords improved their lands without fear, that the citizens of Calcutta offered prayers for the victory of the British during the third Mahratta and the Nepal wars ; that the enlightened people frequently made favourable comments on the fair justice and

¹ Appendix to Report from Select Committee (Public, 1832), p. 295.

solicitude shown by the Government for the spread of education and looked upon the English as deliverers rather than as conquerors. So he pleaded for allowing the people to discuss all questions freely that good government might be secured and knowledge might be spread.

He held that the law of libel was sufficient for maintaining liberty under proper restraint.¹ But if the authorities insisted on imposing additional restrictions on Indian Press, the additional penalties should be "legally inflicted." Mr. F. Warden, formerly member of Council at Bombay and the censor of the Bombay Press, expressed a similar view in 1832.²

¹ Appeal to the King in Council, paras. 19, 22 and 23.

² "If any regulations more arbitrary or restrictive than the laws of the realm be deemed necessary for India, which I do not admit, they should be incorporated in a judicial enactment; and all breaches of them, arising out of a false and malicious perversion of views or motives by which any of the proceedings of the public authorities, or the conduct of official functionaries are animadverted on or discussed in periodical journals, should be punished by fine or imprisonment, by the verdict of a jury, and the sentence of a court of judicature, or by the latter alone, where the former institution does not exist; but in no instance by summary punishment, either by the authority of the Government or of a court of law."—Appendix to Report from Select Committee (1832), p. 290.

The Directors thought that an impartial jury could not be found in India. But John Sullivan said in his evidence that not only an impartial European jury, but

Raja Rammohun thus, did not claim absolute liberty for the Indian Press. His idea was not to subvert the existing government, but to strengthen and popularise it. He anticipated many of the arguments of John Stuart Mill on behalf of Liberty in his appeals for freedom of Press. "Every good ruler," wrote the Raja, "who is convinced of the imperfection of human nature, and reverences the Eternal Governor of the world, must be conscious of the great liability to error in managing the affairs of a vast empire ; and therefore he will be anxious to afford every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestrained liberty of publication is the only effectual means that can be employed."

The Raja's advocacy of freedom of the Press failed indeed to secure the redress which he expected to get from the Supreme Court and from the King in Council. But during the administration of Lord William Bentinck the law against the Press was not enforced. It is to be noted here that Lord Bentinck, as the Governor of Madras, opposed the freedom of the Press. "It is necessary in my opinion," wrote he in 1807, "for the public safety that the Press in India should be kept under the most rigid control."¹ Is it not likely that the

also mixed jury of Indians and Europeans could be easily secured in India.—Minutes of Evidence, q. 848.

¹ Papers relating to the Public Press in India, p. 14.

noble Lord was influenced by the opinion of the Raja in this instance, as he was influenced by the latter's views regarding the Suttee and the introduction of English education ?

IX. The State in relation to Economic Activity.

Rammohun Roy did not clearly formulate any principle by which the scope and limit of the economic activity of the state could be defined. As in politics so in economics he was guided by practical conditions, actually existing in the country, rather than by any theoretical or philosophical consideration. Hence his idea about the economic activity of the state can be explained only by using negative terms. He was affected neither by the Socialistic thought of the Utopians, nor by the Laissez-faire theory of the classical school of economists. He was a firm believer in the institution of individual property, but he was not a strict individualist. He thought it a duty of the government to protect the weak and the helpless against the oppression of the strong.

In his "Rights of Hindus over Ancestral Property" he maintained that the "validity of existing titles to property" should not be disturbed, nor the "contracts founded on the received interpretation of the law" should be violated by the Government.¹ He held, in opposition to the

¹ Works, p. 413.

theory of many Anglo-Indian writers, that in ancient India land was individual property and not the absolute property of the state.¹ He was of opinion that the Government in the Mohammedan period received one half of the produce of the soil 'in return for its general protection.' He, therefore, advocated that the benefit of permanent settlement should be extended to the cultivators, the farmers and labourers in every part of the country.² He did not believe that the direct management of land by the Government could be efficient. "The temporary increase of revenue to Government under its own management would also have soon fallen off, through the misconduct and negligence of the revenue officers, as shewn by innumerable instances in which estates were kept *khas*, i.e., under the immediate management of Government."³ As a strong individualist the Raja held that "every man is entitled by law and reason to enjoy the fruits of his honest labour and good management."⁴

The Raja was in favour of maintaining a prosperous middle class in the country. So he preferred

¹ "From a reference to the laws and the histories of the country, I believe that lands in India were individual property in ancient times."—Revenue System of India ; Works, p. 273.

² Works, p. 305.

³ *Ibid*, p. 289.

⁴ Works, p. 289.

the Zamindari settlement to the Ryotwari settlement. He held that under the former at least one class of people could attain to prosperity but under the latter system everyone remained wretched.

In opposition to the Laissez-faire theory of contemporary England, Rammohun held that it was the duty of government to protect the helpless cultivators against the powerful Zamindars and the Hindu females against the oppression of their male relatives. He contended that the Government had declared by Reg. I of 1793, Sec. 8, Art. I, that 'it is its right and its duty to protect the cultivators as being from their situation most helpless.' But the Government afforded very little legal protection to the cultivators.¹ The heart of the Raja was moved with pity on seeing the wretched condition of the peasantry, living under the Zamindari as well as under the Ryotwari settlement. "In short, such is the melancholy condition of the agricultural labourers, that it always gives me the greatest pain to allude to it." In order to ameliorate the condition of the peasants he suggested that the alleged right of the Zamindar to increase the rent of the ryot should be altogether abolished. If it be urged against such a policy that it would violate the long-standing practice of the country and the principles laid down in the Regulations, that is, interfere with the

¹ Works, pp. 278-79.

right of the Zamindar to do whatever they liked with their ryots, the Raja answered, "I am satisfied that an unjust precedent and practice, even of longer standing cannot be considered as the standard of justice by an enlightened Government."¹ He further appealed to the Government to lower its demand upon the Zamindars and ask the latter to make a proportionate reduction in the rent of the cultivators.

If the land revenue be reduced, there would be a fall in the income of the Government. In order to make good the loss the Raja suggested three methods. The first was the taxation on luxuries and on 'such articles of use and consumption as are not necessities of life.'² The second was the reduction of expenses of the revenue establishment. He suggested that Indians of respectability might be appointed collectors on a salary of about three or four hundred rupees per month, in place of European collectors drawing a salary of a thousand or fifteen hundred rupees per month. He quoted the authority of men like Sir Thomas Munro, Mr. Robert Richards and Mr. H. Ellis to show the expediency and advantage of appointing Indian revenue officers to the higher situations in the revenue department. Rammohun held that

¹ A Paper on the Revenue System of India ; Works, p. 290.

² Questions and Answers on the Revenue System of India ; Works, p. 291.

the suggested reform, if carried out, would not only help the over-burdened peasants but also make the higher class of Indians contented and therefore efficient. In order to reduce the cost of administration the Raja suggested another reform of far-reaching consequence. This was no less than the substitution of a militia force for the standing army. He maintained that permanent settlement with the cultivators, would make them so much attached to the British Government that it would be unnecessary to maintain a standing army. "This consideration is of great importance," observed the Raja, "in respect to the natives of the upper and western provinces, who are distinguished by their superior bravery, and form the greater part of the British Indian army. If this race of men, who are by no means deficient in feelings of personal honour and regard for family respectability, were assured that their rights in the soil were indefeasible so long as the British power should endure, they would from gratitude and self-interest at all times be ready to spend their lives and property in its defence. The saving that might be effected by this liberal and generous policy, through the substituting of a militia force for a great part of the present standing army, would be much greater than any gain that could be realised by any system of increasing land revenue that human ingenuity could devise. How applicable to this case is the

following line of the Persian sage, Sadi : ‘ Be on friendly terms with the subjects, and rest easy about the warfare of thine enemies ; for to an upright prince his people is an army.’ ”¹

The question of the ‘ drain ’ of Indian wealth was discussed for the first time in the periodical Press by the Serampore Missionaries, who from a perusal of Tucker’s ‘ Review of India ’ and other books and papers, came to the conclusion that “ the sum annually derived from India through dividends of Indian stock, the industry of such of her sons as are enabled from year to year to return with a competence and through various other ways amounts to full three millions sterling.”² To these three millions they added another three millions derived as profits of commerce. Rammohun corroborated the statement of the missionaries by referring to the evidence of Messrs. Lloyd and Melville before the Select Committee of the House of Lords (1830) and to a work entitled “ On Colonial Policy as applicable to the Government of India ” by a ‘ Servant of the Company.’ He quoted from the latter work the observation that “ the aggregate of tribute, public and private, so withdrawn from India from 1765 to 1820 (is calculated) at 110,000,000.”

¹ Appendix to the Questions and Answers on the Revenue System; Works, pp. 305-06.

² *The Friend of India* (quarterly series), No. XIII, October, 1825.

With a view to checking such a huge drain of Indian wealth he suggested that the Europeans accumulating capital in India should be encouraged to settle in India so that the wealth might not go out of the country.¹ The problem of colonisation of India by the British was discussed seriously in India in his time. As many as four voluminous reports were submitted by the Select Committee on Colonisation and Settlement of India to the House of Commons. In Bengal men like Dwarkanath Tagore and Rammohun Roy warmly supported the scheme of colonisation. Both of them delivered speeches in the Town Hall on the 15th December, 1829, welcoming the proposal for colonisation. Rammohun said in that meeting, "I am impressed with the conviction that the greater our intercourse with European gentlemen, the greater will be our improvement in literary, social and political affairs."² The *India Gazette*, which was described by the editor of 'John Bull' in an article in the *Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review* as 'ultra-radical in its politics,'³ advocated colonisation, but like the Manchester economists held that it would certainly lead to the separation of India from England.⁴

✓ Works, pp. 285, 311.

² *Asiatic Journal*, June, 1830.

³ *Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review*, 1833, p. 405.

✓ ⁴ The opinion of the *India Gazette* reveals that the

From the *Samachar Darpan* of the 15th October, 1831, we learn that Kalinath Roy, a close

Anglo-Indian newspapers, a century ago, were not opposed to Indian aspirations. As the article is important for more than one reason, we make below a large extract from it.

"It is not impossible that the unrestricted settlement of Europeans in British India is one of the means that will ultimately lead to the dissolution of the connection between England and this country, or rather to the loss of the dominion which England at present exercises. But this is no reason why their settlement should be prevented or discouraged. If it is, it is a reason also for the prevention and discouragement of every means tending to the same end, such as the general spread of native education, the security of property attained by the pure administration of equal laws, the improvements of the products of the country, the increase of trade and every other means by which knowledge may be diffused, the character of the people raised, and the resources of the country developed. All these will have the inevitable effect of qualifying the people of India for enjoying political and civil liberty, and of furnishing them both with the will and the power to claim what they deem to be their rights. The separation of India from Great Britain cannot in the nature of things be prevented. It must come sooner or later; and after appropriating to the mother country all the advantages which colonial possessions can confer during the period of our rule, the true system of governing them should aim to provide that the separation shall be safe, gradual and friendly, whenever it may take place, so as to prevent the possible evils and secure the greatest benefits both to Great Britain and her colonies when the power of the former shall cease."

India Gazette, July 20, (1820) see Dalziel 1830-33

friend of Rammohun persuaded a number of persons to sign a petition to Parliament in favour of colonization. The motive of Rammohun and his party was misunderstood by many in Bengal. A reader of the *Darpan* wrote, "It is not the wish of the great body of the Hindus that the English should come and cultivate the ground and become landlords." He concluded his article by saying that Rammohun "can by no means be considered as a promoter of the general welfare of India."¹ But Rammohun never suggested that the ordinary labourers of England should come and cultivate the land. He did not want European labour, but welcomed only European skill and capital. He asked those Europeans to come and settle in India, who by their superior knowledge and public spirit would elevate the character of the people and bring about the industrial regeneration of India. He hoped that Europeans would introduce better methods of agriculture and effect improvements in the mechanical arts. They would teach the people how to secure political rights and would themselves secure better administration of the country by representing the grievances of India to the authorities in England. It might be objected that "if the population of India were raised to wealth, intelligence and public spirit, by the accession and by the example of numerous respectable European

✓¹ *Samachar Darpan*, October 15, 1831.

settlers, the mixed community so formed would revolt as the United States of America formerly did against the power of Great Britain, and would ultimately establish independence. In reference to this, however, it must be observed that the Americans were driven to rebellion by misgovernment, otherwise they would not have revolted and separated themselves from England. Canada is a standing proof that an anxiety to effect a separation from the mother country is not the natural wish of a people, even tolerably well-ruled. The mixed community of India, in like manner, so long as they are treated liberally, and governed in an enlightened manner, will feel no disposition to cut off its connection with England, which may be preserved with so much mutual benefit to both countries.”¹ *Since 181*

X. *The State in relation to Social Activity.*

As we have stated before, Rammohun Roy was not a believer in the *laissez-faire* policy ; he was, on the other hand, inclined to invoke the help of the Government in improving the moral, social, cultural and political condition of India. As he insisted on the moral obligation of the Government to protect the cultivators, so he demanded that the Government should “promote a more liberal

✓¹ Settlement in India by Europeans : Works, pp. 315-19.

and enlightened system of instruction, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful Sciences.”¹ He thought it also a duty of the Government to abolish the *Suttee* system, on the ground that the females are as much entitled to protection of life as the males ; and that it is the duty of Government to abolish any custom which denies to the female population the right to live.²

XI. *The Ideal of the Raja.*

Raja Rammohun Roy was one of the earliest champions of the noble ideal of international co-operation. The prayer which he made to the Supreme Being was :

“ May God render religion destructive of differences and dislike between man and man, and conducive to the peace and union of mankind.”³ In the British Government of India he saw the agency by which the people of Asia might be raised to the level of Europeans in culture and material civilization, without which process of levelling up the splendid ideal of universal brotherhood would always remain an idle dream.

¹ A Letter on English Education to Lord Amherst.
² Address to Lord William Bentinck: Works, pp. 476-77.

³ An Appeal to the Christian Public: Works, p. 564.

As an apostle of the new creed of universal brotherhood, Rammohun suggested various means by which the union between India and Great Britain might become permanent. He thought that the complete security of property, equality before the eye of law, enjoyment of all the civil rights, appointment to high offices according to merit, and consultation of public opinion, if allowed by the Government, would make the Indians firmly "attached to the present system of Government, so that it may become consolidated, and maintain itself by the influence of the intelligent and respectable classes of the inhabitants, and by the general good-will of the people, and not any longer stand isolated in the midst of its subjects, supporting itself merely by the exertion of superior force."¹

But the Raja was no doctrinaire. He did not believe in political prophecy. He was perfectly aware of the fact that in spite of all he had said about the means of securing the permanence of British rule in India, a time might come when India might become independent of England. He, however, desired that the separation should be a peaceful one and that India with the help of the Christian Powers of Europe should take up the task of 'enlightening and civilising the surrounding nations of Asia.'

¹ Works, p. 268.

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RADICALS.

I. Introduction.

While Raja Rammohun Roy was disseminating his fruitful political ideas, western culture and civilisation was being spread through the medium of education, provided in the Hindu College. The Raja had taken a prominent part in the establishment of the Hindu College, and it must have afforded him great satisfaction to find that some of the best students of the Hindu College took up his political programme before his departure from India. Amongst these politically-minded students of the Hindu College were Tarachand Chakravarty, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Rasikkrishna Mullick, Ramgopal Ghosh and Pearychand Mitra. These five brilliant students of the Hindu College were close associates of one another in every sphere of activity. But as the last two personages have acquired great renown as practical politicians we shall discuss their political ideas in the next chapter. (In this chapter we shall discuss the political ideas of Tarachand Chakravarty, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Rasikkrishna Mullick and Akshaykumar Dutta. All these thinkers were greatly influenced

by the Revolutionary doctrines of 'natural rights' and 'equality.' All of them, excepting the last, were disciples of Derozio and came in direct and intimate contact with Rammohun Roy. Between the sailing of the Raja for England on the 19th of November, 1830, and the return of Dwarkanath Tagore from England in company with George Thompson in January, 1843, they made great efforts to rouse the political consciousness of the people of Bengal.

Let us first of all take up for discussion the political opinion of the students of the Hindu College. A Hindu correspondent of the *Englishman* described in May, 1836, the political opinion of the Hindu College students in the following words: "In matters of politics, they are all radicals, and are followers of Benthamite principles. The very word Tory is a sort of ignominy among them.....They think that toleration ought to be practised by every government, and the best and surest way of making the people abandon their barbarous customs and rites is by diffusing education among them. With respect to the questions relating to Political Economy, they all belong to the school of Adam Smith. They are clearly of opinion that the system of monopoly, the restraints upon trade, and the international laws of many countries, do nothing but paralyse the efforts of industry, impede the progress of agriculture and

manufacture, and prevent commerce from flowing in its natural course.”¹ ✓

Students of the Hindu College were highly influenced by the personality and teaching of Henry Vivian Derozio (1809-1831). Derozio was appointed the fourth teacher of the Hindu College in 1828 and continued to serve that institution up to the 25th of April, 1831. He was an ideal teacher, a brilliant organiser, an enthusiastic journalist, a gifted poet and a philosopher of no mean merit.² He was the assistant editor of the “*India Gazette*,” which was “ultra-radical in its politics,”³ editor of the “*Calcutta Literary Gazette*,” contributor to the “*Calcutta Magazine*,”

✓¹ *The Englishman*, May, 1836, quoted in the *Asiatic Intelligence* of October, 1836.

² Derozio published a criticism of Kant of which Dr. Mill, the principal of the Bishop’s College, said ‘that the objections which Derozio published to the philosophy of Kant, were perfectly original and displayed powers of reasoning and observation which would not disgrace even gifted philosophers.’—Biography of Henry Derozio by Thomas Edwards (1884), p. 40.

An essay on Moral Philosophy, translated by H. L. V. ✓ Derozio from the French of M. Monperties, was published in the *Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review*, 1833, pp. 519 ff. (This Magazine is available in the Uttarpara Library.)

³ *Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review*, 1833, p. 405, articles on ‘The Calcutta Press’ by the editor of *John Bull*,

“*Indian Magazine*,” “*Bengal Annual*,” and the “*Kaleidoscope*,” and editor of the “*East Indian*,” the organ of the Anglo-Indian community. Amongst his students were Krishnamohan Banerjee, Rasikkrishna Mullick, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghosh, Madhavchandra Mullick, Ramtanu Lahiri, Maheshchandra Ghosh, Sivachandra Deb, Harachandra Ghosh, Radhanath Sikdar, Govindachandra Bysack, and Amritalal Mitra.¹ The interest taken by Derozio in the training of these youngmen is vividly expressed in his poem entitled “To the Students of the Hindoo College,” in which he wrote

“ And how you worship truth’s omnipotence,
 What joyance rains upon me, when I see
 Fame, in the mirror of futurity
 Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain—
 And then, I feel I have not lived in vain.”²

His students too regarded him as one of the greatest creators of Modern Bengal. Ramgopal Ghosh, Tarachand Chakravarty, and Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, started in 1842 a periodical entitled the ‘*Bengal Spectator*.’ In it they wrote: “About this time the lamented Henry Derozio by his talents and enthusiasm, by his unwearied exertions in and out of the Hindu College, by his course of lectures at Mr. Hare’s School, by

¹ Life of David Hare by Pearychand Mitra.

² *Bengal Annual*, 1831.

his regular attendance and exhortations at the weekly meetings of the Academic Institution (*Foot-note.*—A debating club over which H. L. V. Derozio presided for several years) and above all by his animating, enlightening and cheerful conversation had wrought a change in the mind of the native youth, which is felt to this day, and which will ever be remembered by those who have benefited by it.”¹

H. L. V. Derozio was a devoted worshipper of liberty in every sphere of life—social, political and religious.² He wrote a poem on ‘The Greeks at Marathon,’ on the occasion of the victory of the Greeks over the Turks. He infused patriotism in the heart of his students.³

¹ *Bengal Spectator*, September 1, 1842.

² When Prasannacoomar Tagore performed the Durga Puja ceremony, Derozio attacked him vigorously in the “*East Indian*.”—*India Gazette*, October 19, 1831.

³ Pearychand Mitra in his ‘Life of David Hare’ says of Derozio: “He used to impress upon them the sacred duty of thinking for themselves—to be in no way influenced by any of the idols mentioned by Bacon—to live and die for truth—to cultivate all the virtues, shunning vice in every shape. He often read examples from ancient history of the love of justice, patriotism, philanthropy and self-abnegation ; and the way in which he set forth the points stirred up the minds of his pupils. Some were impressed with the excellence of justice, some, with the paramount importance of truth, some, with patriotism, some, with philanthropy.”

The students of Derozio drew their inspiration from Bacon, Hume and Tom Paine.¹ The *Samachar Darpan* relates a story about the eagerness of the Hindu College students for studying Paine's work. An Indian bookseller indented one hundred copies of Paine's "Age of Reason" and advertised them for sale at one rupee per copy. But such was the demand for the book that he sold them for five rupees per copy. "Some one soon after took the trouble to translate some part of Paine's 'Age of Reason' into Bengalee, and to publish it in the *Prabhakar*."² These students made diligent study of the revolutionary philosophy of France and were stirred to the depths by the second French Revolution. On the 10th December, 1830, a grand banquet was given by the commanders of the French vessels in Bengal in the Town Hall. Two hundred persons attended it.

¹ The Presidency College Register, Part I, Ch. I ; "Hume's Works were then read with avidity ; also Tom Paine's 'Age of Reason' for a copy of which eight rupees was offered by some of the pupils" (of the Hindu College). —*Calcutta Christian Observer*, August, 1832.

² *Samachar Darpan* quoted in Thomas Edward's Life of Henry Derozio.

Dr. Duff also writes : "Here the evil genius of Paine was again resuscitated. Passages from his 'Age of Reason' were often translated verbatim into Bengalee, and inserted in the native newspapers."—Quoted by S. C. Sanial in his "History of the Press in India," *Calcutta Review*, January 1911, p. 28.

“ So great a favourite is the tri-colour at Calcutta, that we find it stated in the ‘ *John Bull*,’ that on Christmas Day, it was hoisted along with the English on the top of Sir David Ochterlony’s monument.”¹

Some students of the Hindu College pined in their heart for the outbreak of a revolution, similar to the French Revolution, in India. This sentiment was expressed in the series of essays, on the grievances of India written by the ‘ Old Hindoo,’ ‘ engaged in heavy commercial duties,’ and published in the *Bengal Harakuru* of 1843. The ‘ *Friend of India* ’ made the following pertinent criticism of this sentiment of the ‘ Old Hindoo ’ :—“ To assert that if the Natives had enjoyed the blessings of the French Revolution, they would by this time have been treated like men, and assumed a proper position among the nations of the earth, is to write absolute nonsense. Let him read Thiers and Allison before he again ventures to long for a revolution which would have turned the Hoogly into a revolutionary torrent, and established a permanent guillotine in Tank Square.”²

¹ *Asiatic Intelligence*, June, 1831.

The Government certainly did not hoist the tri-colour flag. It must have been done by some students of the Hindu College or by some Anglo-Indian enthusiasts. It reminds one of the trick played by the ‘ Volunteers’ in hoisting the Congress flag on Government buildings.

² *Friend of India*, March 16, 1843.

We get positive proof of the deep patriotic feeling of the first few batches of the Hindu College students from the poems of Kashiprasad Ghosh, who himself had received education in that institution. ✓ About 1830 Kashiprasad Ghosh contributed to the '*Bengal Annual*,' the '*Literary Gazette*' and the '*Calcutta Magazine*,' both in verse and prose and was justly appreciated by the public.¹ He published a poem in the '*India Gazette*,' in which he sang the praise of motherland in the following strain :—

“ Land of the Gods and lofty name ;
Land of the fair and beauty's spell ;
Land of the bards of mighty fame,
My native land ! for e'er farewell ! ”²

This song might be taken as the first cry of patriotic fervour, which was roused in Bengal by the introduction of western culture, and which found its most brilliant expression in the '*Bande Mataram*' song of Bankimchandra. Kashiprasad and his friends also dreamt of independence, but they were sagacious enough to recognise that it would take a long time to realise their dream. The following poem entitled “India” published in the evening of his life, shows the spirit which animated the Hindu College students :—

“ But woe me ! I never shall live to behold,
That day of thy triumph, when firmly and bold,

✓ ¹ *India Gazette*, February 17, 1830.

² *Ibid.*

Thou shalt mount on the wings of an eagle on high,
To the region of knowledge and blest Liberty.”¹

The Hindu College students made great efforts to propagate the ideas of social and political reform through their associations and periodical publications. Of these associations three occupied a prominent place in the public eye in that period. The first and foremost of them was the Academic Association or Institution,² which was established in 1828 under the inspiration of Derozio. Thomas Edwards, the biographer of Derozio, made extensive researches into the literature of that period. He gives the following account of the subjects discussed in the ‘Academic Association’ :—
“Free will, free ordination, fate, faith, the sacredness of truth, the high duty of cultivating virtue, and the meanness of vice, the nobility of patriotism, the attributes of God, and the arguments for and against the existence of the Deity as these have been set forth by Hume on the one side, and Reid, Dugald Stewart and Brown on the other, the hollowness of idolatry and the shams of the priesthood, were subjects which

¹ *Mookerjee's Magazine*, 1861, p. 251. *Mookerjee's Magazine* of 1861 is available in the Uttarpara Library, while those of later years are to be found in the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat Library.

² *The Bengal Spectator*, September 1, 1842, calls it the “Academic Institution” while others writing on that period call it the “Academic Association.”

stirred to their very depths the young, fearless, hopeful hearts of the leading Hindoo youths of Calcutta." Secondly, on the 20th February, 1838, Tarinicharan Bandyopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghosh, Ramtanu Lahiri, Tarachand Chakravarty and Rajkrishna De started the "Society for the acquisition of General Knowledge," with the objects of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge, with special reference to the knowledge about the condition of the country, and of promoting friendly relations between the members. Tarachand Chakravarty became its President, Kalachand Seth and Ramgopal Ghosh, its Vice-Presidents, Ramtanu Lahiri and Pearychand Mitra, its Secretaries.¹ Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, then a young man of 21 with a great hankering for enlightenment, joined it as a member.² Thirdly, Kishorychand Mitra established under the inspiration of Dr. Duff "The Hindu Theophilanthropic Society" early in the fourth decade of the last century.³

¹ Sj. Manmathanath Ghosh's *Life of Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay*, pp. 59-61. *The Bengal Harakuru* of the 16th January, 1843, states that in 1843 the number of members of the Society was 200.

² Sj. Satischandra Chakravarty in his masterly edition of "Autobiography of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore," mentions this fact in Appendix VII, p. 316 (Third edition).

³ *Calcutta Review*, October-December, 1844, p. 270,

In this period (1828-1843) the Hindu College students published several magazines to disseminate knowledge about the condition of the country and the science of politics. ‘*The Parthenon*,’ ‘*Gyananneshun*,’ ‘*Hindu Pioneer*’ and ‘*The Bengal Spectator*’ were the publications of the Hindu College students, which dealt with politics. Rev. Krishnamohan Banerjee’s ‘*Inquirer*’ dealt mainly with social and religious questions. Pandit Shivanath Shastri mentions that Tarachand Chakravarty used to edit a paper entitled ‘*The Quill*’ about the year 1842-43, and through it the most radical ideas in politics were spread.¹ But I have not been able to find any reference to this paper.

‘*The Parthenon*’ was started on the 15th of February, 1830. It was declared in its first number that it was to be published not less than four times a month, but it was not to be a periodical work, for it had no fixed day of publication. The paper stated its object thus:—“Hindu by birth, yet European by education and its concomitants, they need some organ for the communication of their sentiments, some tablet where they may register their thought.”² The

Review of “Discourses read at the meetings of the Hindu Theophilanthropic Society,” Calcutta, 1843.

¹ Shivanath Shastri’s *Life of Ramtanu Lahiri*, p. 168 (Third edition).

² *India Gazette*, February 17, 1830.

'*Bengal Spectator*,' conducted probably by the same set of youngmen who had started the '*Parthenon*' gives an idea about the contents of its first number. "The first number (of the *Parthenon*) advocated the cause of colonization and that of female education. It condemned the superstition of the Hindoos and prayed for cheap justice." ¹ But the paper disappeared after the publication of its first number, owing to the opposition of the guardians of the youths, who published it. ²

The next paper started by the students of the Hindu College was '*Gyananneshun*,' which began to be published from 1831 and continued to exist up to 1844. Rasikkrishna Mullick, Ramtanu Lahiri, Tarakchandra Bose, Ramgopal Ghosh and Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee conducted this paper. It seems that during the first three or four years of its existence it was under the able editorship of Rasikkrishna Mullick. ³ The object of the paper was the

✓ *The Bengal Spectator*, September 1, 1842.

✓ *The India Gazette*, March 5, 1830.

³ Mr. S. C. Sanial in his "History of the Press in India" quotes the following letters of Ramgopal Ghosh written to Gobindachandra Bysack:—

I. Cal. 21st Sept., 1835:—"Russik is coming to Calcutta. Ramtanoo is gone home. Tarakchandra Bose, the principal editor of the '*Gyananneshun*' has been lucky enough to get a Deputy Collectorship at Hooghly. I wonder who will carry on the paper."

instruction of the Hindus in the science of government and jurisprudence.¹ The editor of the "*John Bull*" stated in 1833 that its circulation was about 100; but in 1836 John Clark Marshman communicated to the Governor-General in Council that its circulation was about 150 and might be nearer 200.²

The third periodical, published by the Hindu College boys was the '*Hindu Pioneer*.' It published articles on 'Freedom,' 'India under Foreigners' and the like. From the latter article the following quotation is given to show the nature of ideas moving the minds of the Bengali youths in the thirties:—"The Government of India (under the English) is purely aristocratical; the people have no voice in the council of legislature; they have no hand in framing the laws which regulate their civil conduct. We need not expatiate on the monopoly of the State Service,

II. Cal. 9th July, 1837:—"I have a great deal to tell you about the *Gyananneshun* which after this week will go into the hands of Babu Dukshina. This being the last time that I shall have to ask you to write in the *Gyananneshun*, pray, send me something good."

Calcutta Review, 1911, p. 31.

¹ "The object of the journal is the instruction of the Hindoos in the science of government and jurisprudence, and it adds to its crude essays on these abstruse points a few brief items of intelligence."—*Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review*, 1833, p. 417.

² *Calcutta Review*, January, 1911, p. 31.

the law's delay, the insolence of office, the heavy expenses of Government, the retirement from India of all those who acquire wealth, and the enormous taxation to which the country is subjected—evils too well known in India. The Muhammedans patronised merit wherever it was to be found ; the English, like the primitive Hindus, have one caste of men to govern the general body. The violent means by which foreign supremacy has been established, and the entire alienation of the people of the soil from any share in the Government, nay, even from all offices of trust and power, are circumstances which no commercial, no political benefits can authorise or justify.”¹

The fourth paper, started by the first batch of the Hindu College boys, was entitled the ‘*Bengal Spectator*.’ It was started in April, 1842. We shall explain the ideas propagated by it in connection with discussion of the political thought of Tarachand Chakravarty.

The leaders of the first batch of Hindu College students were not only influenced by the critical philosophy of Derozio and the doctrines of the French Revolution but also by the practical statesmanship of Raja Rammohun Roy. Tarachand Chakravarty, the leader of Young Bengal, was a favourite disciple of the Raja. When the Raja

¹ “*Hindu Pioneer*” quoted in the *Asiatic Journal* of May-August, 1838, in the essay on Education of the Native of India.

established the Brahmo Samaj in 1828, Tarachand became its first secretary.¹ There is an amusing story current about the cordial relation between the Raja and Tarachand. One day at noon, meals had been served to the guests at the house of the Raja. The Raja who was standing before a mirror, took unusually long time to comb his hair, while the guests could not partake of the meal in the absence of the host. At last Tarachand approached the Raja and said "Sir, is your song (How long wilt thou see your face in the mirror pleasantly?) meant for others only?" The Raja became ashamed of his conduct and at once came to the dining hall.²

Rasikkrishna Mullick also came in touch with the Raja.³ He was the only Bengali speaker in the condolence meeting of Rammohun Roy held at the Town Hall in 1834. He expressed warm appreciation of the services rendered by the Raja to the cause of the motherland.

Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay retained the appellation of Hindu throughout his life no doubt, but he too was an admirer of the Raja. Rajnarayan Bose informs us in his Autobiography

¹ Shivanath Shastri's "Life of Ramtanu Lahiri," p. 169.

² *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, 1800 Saka, article on "Anecdotes about Rammohun Roy."

³ Shivanath Shastri's "Life of Ramtanu Lahiri," pp. 129-30.

that Dakshnaranjan believed in the Upanishadic monotheism.¹

The political disciples of Rammohun Roy might be divided into two groups—those who championed the cause of the landlords and those who upheld the rights of the Ryots. In the former group were Prasannacoomar Tagore, Dwarkanath Tagore and Ramanath Tagore ; while the latter group consisted of Tarachand Chakravarty, Ramgopal Ghosh, Rasikkrishna Mullick, Daskhinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Pearychand Mitra, all students of the Hindu College, and Akshoykumar Dutta, an indirect disciple of the Raja and the greatest representative of the Philosophical Radicals.

Some students of the Hindu College supported Rammohun Roy's scheme of colonization of India by cultured European settlers,² while others opposed it vigorously. Amongst the latter we find one writer whose brilliant review of the colonial policy on a comparative basis deserves a permanent place in political literature. The paper was published in the "*India Gazette*," with an introduction from the editor who informs us that it is the production of an Indian youth, 'whose attainments do high honour to himself, and to

¹ Autobiography of Rajnarayan Bose, p. 117.

² '*The Parthenon*,' Feb., 15, 1830, quoted in the *India Gazette* of February 17, 1830.

the seminary where he was educated.....It was lately read before a Hindoo Literary Society, composed chiefly of native gentlemen, who have been instructed in the language and literature of England, and who endeavour by monthly papers on subjects of general interest, to confirm and extend their previous acquisition.”¹

The writer of this paper entitled, “On the Colonization of India,” begins with the colonization of Asia Minor by the Greeks. Then he describes the character of the Roman colonies, which were established to keep the conquered people under political subjection. He observes:—“Of three different sorts of colonies, I have already mentioned two, namely, colonies for sending away from the mother country, an unusual increase of population, etc., and those established for keeping any vanquished nation in obedience. The third sort are colonies of Trade. Of this, among the ancients, the Phoenicians established the greatest number.This of course of all sorts of colonies is the least exceptionable, as commerce is generally conducive to the improvement of a country, and this sort of colonies would perhaps be a great

¹ The *India Gazette*, February 12, 1830. The Hindoo Literary Society, referred to above, must have been the Academic Association or Institution. I suspect from the style of the paper that its author was Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay. But I have not been able to find any definite proof of his authorship.

blessing to the land in which they are established. This would certainly have been the case with the Phœnician colonies, but they also drove away the original inhabitants into the further part of the country, and established their own people.' ”

Having shown the oppressive character of the colonists in the ancient world, the writer takes up the colonial policy of the modern states. He cites the history of colonization of Ireland by the English and observes that the Irish being regarded as rebels were not given the price of the land, which the English settlers occupied. So far as the colonization of North America and New South Wales is concerned, the writer describes its adverse effect on the native population by quoting an observation of ‘an eminent writer’ who wrote, “No sooner did the benevolent inhabitants of Europe behold, their sad condition, than they immediately go to work to ameliorate and improve it. They introduced among them *rum, gin, brandy* and the other comforts of life, and it is astonishing to read how soon the poor savages learnt to estimate these *blessings*.” Then he describes the colonial policy of the Dutch and the Spaniards. Of the Spanish colonies, he remarks that they “afford a far greater example of oppression and cruelty.”¹ Raja Rammohun Roy must have been embarrassed by the brilliant array of so many

¹ *India Gazette*, February 12, 1830.

-historical precedents of the oppression of the native population by the colonists. He did not make any attempt to answer this paper in his statement on the "Colonization of India," except the remark that the people of Calcutta were actually in a better condition than the people of the Mofussil, where there were no European settlers.

We have shown in the first chapter how the powerful pleading of Raja Rammohun Roy led the authorities in England to insert the 87th clause in the Charter Act of 1833. Indians were declared eligible for high posts by it, but for several years to come the clause remained a dead letter. Meanwhile, the students of the Hindu College, inspired by the revolutionary doctrine of the equality of men, made vigorous attacks on the Government for keeping all responsible posts as monopoly for the British people. It is quite likely that the Government felt the necessity of satisfying these philosophical radicals by opening to the 'English-educated' youths the posts of Deputy Collectors. We have mentioned above, how the rank of the philosophical radicals was thinned by the appointment of Tarakchandra Bose, the principal editor of the '*Gyananneshun*' in 1835, as Deputy Collector of Hooghly. Similarly, Chandrasekhar Deb (who first suggested to Rammohun Roy the idea of establishing the Brahma Samaj), Rasikkrishna Mullick, Sibchandra Deb, Gobindachandra Bysack, and Madhabchandra Mullick were

appointed Deputy Collectors.¹ The appointment of so many of the students of Derozio to Government posts created a void in the party of the Philosophical Radicals. The Act creating the post of Deputy Magistrates was passed on the 5th of August 1843, and many worthy ex-students of the Hindu College were appointed to these posts.

Dwarkanath Tagore came back from England in January, 1843. Having been closely associated for a long time with Raja Rammohun Roy he had imbibed the spirit of practical statesmanship from the Raja. After his return from England, he directed George Thompson to mix with the members of the "Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge." It is quite likely that Dwarkanath and George Thompson won over the Hindu College party in 1843 and turned their minds from discussion of theoretical rights to the agitation for practical reforms.

After 1843 the mantle of the Philosophical Radicals fell upon Akshoykumar Dutta, whose poverty prevented him from acquiring collegiate education and who consequently, could not aspire to a high executive post.

¹ Bholanath Chandra's 'Life of Digambar Mitra,' Vol. I, p. 19.

II. *Rasik Krishna Mullick*

(c. 1810-1858).

Rassik Krishna Mullick, born in a Tili Vaishya family of Sinduriapati, Calcutta, was regarded as an oracle of learning and wisdom by his fellow-students of the Hindu College. Pandit Shivanath Shastri describes how Ramtanu Lahiri, belonging to a high class Brahman family, regarded Rasik as his intellectual *Guru*. Whenever any view of the Young Bengal School contrary to the opinion of Rasik was put before Ramtanu, he used to brush it aside abruptly with the remark. "Do you understand better than Rasik?"¹ The high esteem and regard which was shown to Rasik by his high-caste friends was a symptom of the liberalising spirit of the western system of education. Harish Chandra Mukherjee wrote an article on Rasik Krishna on the latter's death. From that article we come to learn that owing to his radical views on social reform, Rasik Krishna was forced to cut off his connection with his family. Rasik "began life as a teacher in Mr. Hare's school and closed it with the highest honours which an uncovenanted servant could

¹ Shivanath Shastri's *Life of Ramtanu Lahiri*, p. 128. Pandit Shastri, however, regrets that he could not find much information regarding Rasik's life.

obtain." He bequeathed five thousand rupees to the District Charitable Society. About his erudition Harish Chandra remarks :—" With a rich and fertile mind, replenished with the sentiments of the best English authors, and disciplined to an admirable training, he was a pride to the old Hindu College." ¹

Rasik Krishna was the editor of the 'Gyananeshun' before 1834, when being appointed a Deputy Collector he had to leave Calcutta. I have not been able to trace any file of the 'Gyananeshun,' but I have found some of its articles quoted in the *India Gazette* of 1833. These articles form our only source of information regarding Rasik's political ideas.

Rasik Krishna believed that an intimate connection exists between the condition of society, and form of government. If the government be inefficient, and administration of justice be corrupt, individual subjects would certainly deteriorate in moral virtues. In an article, condemning the Calcutta Police, he wrote : " That the state of society, as influenced by laws, must be unhinged when the source of justice is corrupted, is nothing new to the political student. That men of wealth and influence will carry off the day, though in an unjust cause, against competitors in a just cause, but less favoured by fortune, is nothing

¹ *Hindu Patriot*, 21st January, 1858.

strange to him who observes how far corruption can prevail.”¹

He maintains that the primary function of government is to administer justice fairly and impartially. But this function can be properly discharged only by such a government as has thoroughly identified itself with the welfare and interest of the governed. In India, according to him, such was not the case. Raja Rammohun held that the constitution of India, being controlled by the Court of Directors and Board of Control was one of checks and balances. But Rasik Krishna condemned the government of the Company. He wrote :—“The administration of justice in British India is so much characterised by everything that is opposed to the just principles of government, that we offer no apology to introduce it to the notice of our readers..... A body of merchants has been placed over us as our sovereigns. The question is, how far can they frame laws and administer justice, so as to protect our rights and liberties, consistently with their mercantile spirit ? The administration of British India must necessarily be composed of a council of merchants, whose principal aim as such will be to promote their own interests, and to manage their affairs with as little expense as possible. In a

¹ “Gyananneshun,” quoted in the *India Gazette* on the 12th April, 1833.

word, they will try to make their government subservient to the one ignoble principle of gain.”¹ Then he cites examples of the shortcoming of the Judicial administration in India and hastily concludes that, “every provision that has been made for the distribution of justice, has been dictated by the all-absorbing idea of self-interest.” He, therefore, advocates the abolition of the political power of the East India Company. “As long as the present system continues in operation, those evils which we have pointed out, will continue to exist.”²

Like Rammohun, Rasik Krishna too, pleaded for Indianisation of services. Even before the passing of the Charter Act of 1833 Lord Bentinck had declared certain judicial posts open to Indians. But, in practice, the half-educated *Amlas* of the courts were promoted to the post of Sadar Ameen. Rasik Krishna urged the necessity of appointing educated Indians only to government posts.³ The common objection to the appointment

¹ As has been mentioned before, the Hindu College students believed in the doctrine of Natural Rights. It is surprising to note that his article was allowed to be published by the Government when the Press Law of 1823 was still in force.

² “Gyananneshun,” quoted in the *India Gazette* of 8th April, 1833.

³ *Ibid*, quoted in the *India Gazette* of February 28, 1833.

of Indians to high executive and judicial posts at that time was that Indian officers had proved to be corrupt. Rasik Krishna admitted the validity of the charge of corruption, but argued that the Indian officers were corrupt for two reasons. First, they did not get the benefit of education¹ and secondly, their salary was not high enough to place them above want and, therefore, above corruption. He held that "in an extensive country like India, the natives must have an ample share in the administration of justice—but that justice cannot be pure, as long as the administrators of it are not enlightened by education and rendered independent in their means of support."¹

Like all other writers of the period, Rasik Krishna maintained that the Indian people have got a right to receive education through the agency of the State. He also believed that no scheme of improving the machinery of government in India could be successful till the people were educated. "Therefore, it becomes the paramount duty of our Government, if it really have the good of its subjects at heart, to spare no means in its power to facilitate the education of the natives ; nor we can be said to be expecting

¹ "Gyananneshun," quoted in the *India Gazette* of March 29, 1833.

too much, when we request it to appropriate a part of the immense revenue that India yields to the intellectual improvement of her benighted sons.”¹ As a means of educating the people, Rasik Krishna suggested that Government should distribute freely or at a small price good books which were likely to diffuse knowledge amongst the people. He reiterated his fond belief that the diffusion of knowledge “is the best means of reforming the character of the people.”²

Most of the educated people, belonging to the middle classes, have proved themselves worthy of their claim to represent the masses, by championing the cause of the down-trodden peasantry against the landlords. Like Raja Rammohun, Rasik Krishna was one of the earliest of these champions of the rights of the Ryots. He wrote : “The permanent settlement in Bengal, though perhaps concocted and set to work with the best motive imaginable, has, in consequence of glaring defects in the judicial system, betrayed an utter neglect of the rights of the humbler classes.”³ “The Government limiting its own demand to a

¹ “Gyananneshun,” quoted in the *India Gazette* of March 29, 1833.

² *Ibid*, quoted in the *India Gazette* of the 1st February, 1833.

³ This argument was taken up by Bankimchandra in his essays on “The Peasants of Bengal.”

certain fixed ratio, the Zamindars are rendered secure against any further encroachment upon their profits; while the poor labourer is still left in a precarious position with regard to his rights, which are wholly dependent upon the arbitrary will of his superior.”¹

We have shown in the first chapter that the idea of inclusion of some representatives of India in the British Parliament was in the air in the early years of the third decade of the last century. “The Gyananneshun,” however, did not support such a proposal. According to this paper there were two objections to such a proposal. First, proper representatives could not be found. Indians were so much unaccustomed to the mode of living in England that they could not go to England for representing their countrymen in Parliament. Europeans could never truly represent Indian interests. Secondly, even if some representatives be sent from India, it would be very difficult for the constituencies to issue mandates to them. It took twelve months to send a letter and receive its answer from England at that time. Moreover, the public in India would not be able to judge whether their representatives were voting honestly or not. The writer emphasised “the utter impossibility of our

¹ “Gyananneshun,” quoted in the *India Gazette* of the May, 10th 1833.

exercising an efficient control over the actions of our representatives, when the Britons, far more enlightened and public-spirited than the Hindoos, cannot prevent the corruption of their representatives, though they act under their very eyes.’²¹ This article illustrates not only the views of the writer on the proper relation between the representatives and their constituencies but also shows how the working of the English constitution of the pre-Reform days² was accurately observed by the intellectual class in India.

III. Tarachand Chakravarty

(c. 1804-1855).

Tarachand Chakravarty was the undisputed leader of Young Bengal, and by virtue of his intimate relation with Raja Rammohun Roy, he

¹ “Gyananneshun,” quoted in the *Asiatic Intelligence* of February, 1835. I am not sure whether towards the close of 1834, when this article was published, Rasik Krishna was in the editorial charge of the “Gyananneshun.”

² I have deliberately written ‘pre-Reform days’ for two reasons. First, that though the article was written in 1834 yet the information regarding the state of things in Parliament after the First Reform Act could not have come to India so early. Secondly, there was very little of Parliamentary corruption in the Reformed Parliament.

formed the bridge between the first generation of the public-minded men of Bengal and the first batch of the Hindu College students. His position as a leader was acknowledged by the '*Englishman*' which denominated the younger generation of public men as the 'Chukerverty faction.' He began his career as a teacher, then having served in various capacities rose to be the Deputy Registrar of the Sadar Dewani Adalat. Afterwards, he became a Munsif.¹ But he resigned that office owing to some unknown reason.² In or before the year 1846 he became the manager of the Burdwan Raj.³

Tarachand does not seem to have been gifted with oratorical power.⁴ George Thompson, as

¹ The Presidency College Register, p. 452.

² Shivanath Shastri's *Life of Ramtanu Lahiri*, p. 168. I think that a worshipper of Equality like Tarachand found it humiliating to serve in the subordinate capacity of the Munsiff, and therefore, he resigned his post. My hypothesis is supported by the tenor of the editorial articles written by Tarachand in the '*Bengal Spectator*.' In one of these articles (page 6, 1842) he says that service in the judicial branch "often becomes very unpleasant from the present state of feeling entertained by the generality of the Covenanted Service towards their native subordinates."

³ Rajnarayan Bose in his "*Autobiography*" (p. 54) mentions that he and Maharshi Debendranath put up with Tarachand at Burdwan during the Puja vacation in 1846.

⁴ In the meeting convened for establishing the

president of the meeting convened to establish the Bengal British India Society on the 20th April, 1843, paid a glowing tribute to the character of Tarachand in the following words: "A man, whose earnest though quiet zeal, whose retiring modesty, whose benevolent feelings, and whose incorruptible integrity entitled him, and had, he believed, won for him the esteem and admiration of all who knew him."¹ Though Tarachand was a modest man, yet he knew how to be firm and dignified even before persons of authority and reputation. In the famous meeting of the 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge,' held on the 8th February, 1843, in the Hindu College Hall, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay began to read a paper on "The Present State of the East India Company's Criminal Judicature, and Police under the Bengal Presidency." When he had but read half of his essay, Captain

British India Society Tarachand moved the third Resolution and said "that unused as he was to appear as a speaker before the public, he could do little more than submit the resolution placed in his hand. He was most anxious for the success of the work in which those around him were embarked, and would do all in his humble power to assist it but it could not be in the way of making speeches."—'Bengal Harukaru,' April 24, 1843.

¹ Speeches of Mr. George Thompson, edited by Raj Yogeshur Mitter (1895).

D. L. Richardson, Principal of the College, interrupted him by observing that 'he could not permit it (the College Hall), to be converted into a den of treason, and must close the doors against all such things.'

Then Tarachand as President of the Society said: "Captain Richardson! with due respect, I beg to say that I cannot allow you to proceed any longer in this course of conduct towards our Society, and as the President of the Society, and on behalf of my friend Babu Dukhin, I must say, that your remarks are anything but becoming. I am bound also to add that I consider your conduct as an insult to the Society, and that if you do not retract what you have said and make due apology, we shall represent the matter to the Committee of the Hindoo College, and if necessary, to the Government itself. We have obtained the use of this public hall by leave, applied for and received, from the Committee, and not through your personal favour. You are only a visitor on this occasion, and possess no right to interrupt a member of this Society in the utterance of his opinions. I hope that Captain Richardson will see the propriety of offering an apology to my friend, the writer of the essay and to the meeting."¹

Tarachand Chakravarty was not simply a political agitator. He was a learned man, in the true

¹ "The Bengal Harukaru," February, 13, 1843.

sense of the word. He translated the *Manu Samhita* from Sanskrit into English and prepared an *Anglo-Bengali Dictionary*. As early as 1830 he had imbibed the scientific spirit of historical research. In course of a review of “*The Assam Boornnjy or the History of Assam by Huliram Dhaikiyal Phookun, an inhabitant of Geoyahatee in Assam, Bengal era 1236, p. 86.*” Tarachand made the following observations :—“As publications of a historical nature are seldom known to emanate from the Native Press, a short account of this work may be read with interest by those liberal members of the European community, who sincerely desire and generously encourage the intellectual improvement of the natives. I will, therefore, attempt to give a brief sketch of this history, premising that except in one or two instances our *author has not made any mention of the authorities on which his work is founded*, and has, in more than one place, made its authority rest on tradition.”¹

‘The Bengal Spectator’ was published under the nominal editorship of Ramgopal Ghosh, who in a letter to Gobindachandra Bysak, admitted that Krishnamohan Banerjee and Pearychand

¹ *India Gazette*, February 5, 1830. If the reviewer’s name be omitted, one would think it coming from the pen of the late Mr. R. D. Banerjee, who entertained such a great contempt for ‘mere tradition.’

Mitra would be its regular contributors and Tarachand would not only write in it but also look over the articles of other contributors.¹ From a careful study of the files of the 'Bengal Spectator' I have been convinced that the editorial articles in the 'Bengal Spectator' were generally written by Tarachand Chakravarty, and not by Ramgopal Ghosh, who himself promised in the letter referred to above that he would be 'an occasional scribbler.' Then again, the editorial articles of the paper reveal to us an intimate knowledge of the life and works of Raja Rammohun, with whom Tarachand alone of all his colleagues, came in direct and friendly contact. In an editorial article, published in the 'Bengal Spectator' in July, 1842, a proposal was made to publish a collection of the works of Rammohun Roy. The writer observes: "Should we be so fortunate as to hear of its adoption, we would gladly submit to them a list of Rammohun Roy's works, *which we have* prepared, and procure for them such of the books as we can obtain from friends, on being requested to do so." I think, the first secretary to the Brahma Samaj alone

¹ *Calcutta Review*, S. C. Sanial's articles on 'History of the Press in India,' 1911, January. This letter has also been quoted in full by S. J. Brajendra-nath Bandyopadhyay in his "Deshiya Sambadpatrer Itihas," *Sahitya Parishat Patrika*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2.

could have taken such a lively interest in the preservation and publication of the Raja's works. Assuming the editorial articles of the 'Bengal Spectator' to have been written by Tarachand, I shall now proceed to give an account of his political ideas which underlie those articles.

Like Raja Rammohun and Dwarkanath Tagore, Tarachand seems to have been dissatisfied with the purely secular education provided in the Hindu College. He pleaded for the introduction of moral education, which "recognizes, above all, the grand deontological maxim of Bentham, what it is a man's duty to do, cannot but be also his interest. It is the Arithmetic of pains and pleasures."¹ This quotation furnishes an additional proof of the influence of Bentham on the mind of Young Bengal.

Tarachand also maintained that it is the essential function of government to provide education to the subjects. The function of government according to him is not only to maintain peace and order but also to lead the citizens to live a better life. He writes: "The dignified authorities to whom the destinies of millions are entrusted ill discharge their *stewardship* so long as they confine their attention to the collection of revenue and the maintenance of an ordinary police and judicature.

¹ "The Bengal Spectator," September, 1842, p. 88.

An enlightened government ought likewise to direct their attention to the dissemination of sound and useful knowledge among the rising generation of their subjects. The general enlightenment of the people is undoubtedly the best guarantee of a good government. While it checks the commission of crime, it contributes to the preservation of peace, and by promoting the interest of commerce, it strengthens the resources of the Government.”¹ He shows from the statistics, collected by Mr. Adam, that ‘even the native system of instruction, however crude, imperfect and desultory, most materially contribute to diminish the number of offences against the laws and to maintain the peace and good order of society.’

According to Tarachand, power has been delegated to government by the people with a view to ‘the protection of rights, the prevention of wrongs and the consequent promotion of happiness.’² Such being the origin of government, it is bound ‘to consider the education of the people, whom they govern, a part of their duty.’³ He maintains that the education which the government should provide must not be merely theoretical in character. France was at that time being transformed into an industrial state; and the Government of Louis

1 “The Bengal Spectator,” November 15, 1842.

2 *Ibid*, January 1, 1843, p. 3.

3 *Ibid*.

Philippe was maintaining the Napoleonic tradition of imparting sound vocational teaching through government institutions. Tarachand thus points out the example of the French Government: "When we remember the benefits which have resulted in France from the Polytechnic School of Paris, and the various other special schools, instituted for the purpose of imparting theoretical and practical instruction in the Mechanical Arts, Agriculture, Architecture, Figure and Landscape Drawing, Navigation, Fortification and in fact all those subjects which 'come to the business and bosom of men,' we cannot but think strongly of the feasibility of our proposal, and of its being calculated to produce the consequences which we have mentioned above." ¹

The Hīndu College students were the first to make organised effort to Indianise the Government services. Their interest, too, was directly concerned in the movement as they knew it full well that they would be the first to be appointed to high posts, when these would be thrown open to Indians. On the 18th April, 1843, they held a public meeting in the Town Hall to send a Memorial to the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company, praying for the bestowal of more offices on Indians. Tarachand Chakravarty moved the resolution and proposed

¹ "The Bengal Spectator," 1842, p. 6.

that the Memorial should be sent through Mr. John Sullivan, who had championed their cause.¹ In a meeting of the Bengal British Indian Society, held on the 6th July, 1843, a resolution was passed praying to the Government for more extensive employment of Indians.² Tarachand believed “that the maintenance of the Civil Service is calculated to promote a sort of clanship which usually blinds the sense of justice to members of its own fraternity and thus thwarts the efforts of natives to seek redress from the grievances to which they may contribute.” Besides this, the maintenance of the Civil Service as a monopoly of Englishmen “represses the expansion of talent and genius among the different classes of the people and prevents industry, merit and character from being duly remunerated.” So he pleaded, “Open it to public competition, and the result will be more salutary and advantageous in every point of view.”³

¹ “The Bengal Spectator”, April 25, 1843.

² *Ibid*, July 11, 1843.

³ *Ibid*, January 15, 1843.

An article, signed by K (apparently Krishnamohan Banerjee) published on p. 100 of the paper in 1842, also advocates the opening of judicial and fiscal offices to competitive examination. The writer suggests that Indians should “petition and repetition the Supreme Legislature itself until the voice of reason and justice finds at last an echo in every British heart.”

Tarachand Chakravarty as a disciple of Raja Rammohun Roy believed that the grievances which were not redressed by the Government of the East India Company should be laid before the Crown and the Supreme Court, which was the Court of the Crown. When Radhanath Shikdar failed to get redress for his legitimate grievances in the Company's Court, Tarachand advised him "to turn away from the Company's Court to the Supreme Court."¹

¹ "The Bengal Spectator," September 1, 1843.

Radhanath Shikdar (1813-1870) was a student of Derozio. His case, insufficiently and inaccurately described in Pandit Shivanath Shastri's *Life of Ramtanu Lahiri* (pp. 146-147), illustrates the mentality of the Hindu College students. Radhanath himself describes the cause of his quarrel with Magistrate Vansittart at Dehradun, in the "Bengal Spectator" of September 1, 1843. Radhanath was serving as the Sub-assistant of the Great Trigonometrical Survey in 1843. The coolies of the Survey Department were pressed to forcible service by the servants of the magistrate, to carry some goods of the latter. Radhanath did not like this sort of arbitrary treatment towards the coolies; and so he detained the goods of the magistrate. The magistrate then came with a friend of his, a military officer, to the Survey Office. What followed next is described below in Radhanath's own words:—

"One of these gentlemen called out 'Who has detained my property?' I answered: 'It has been detained by my orders.' He continued, 'What business had you to detain my property?' I replied: 'Just as mach as you

IV. Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay

(1814-1878).

The leading part which Dakshinaranjan played in the public life of Bengal between 1830 and 1857 and in the history of Oudh between 1860 and 1874, has been admirably described by his biographer Sj. Manmathanath Ghosh. As the biographer has not discussed the political ideas of Dakshinaranjan, we shall try to present his political thoughts from his lectures and essays, published in the "Bengal Harukaru."

Dakshinaranjan was a votary of the doctrine of Equality. He held that God "in his impartial wisdom created all men alike equal to one another,

had in pressing and maltreating my people to convey your baggage ; and I intend to take legal measures.' He rejoined, ' I certainly gave orders to my people to procure coolies, but not to press private servants ; and I shall discharge the whole set of my burkundazes.' He now beckoned to Mr. Keelan (an officer of the Survey Department) and asked him to persuade me to give up the property. Mr. Keelan replied, ' but what security shall we have against the recurrence of the proceeding complained of ?' I then observed, ' there is no regulation authorising the forcible seizure and employment of anybody.' Upon which the gentleman in question in a loud and authoritative tone said : ' Do you know who I am ?' At this moment, the other gentleman, who had remained silent, sprang forward and questioned me, ' Who the devil are you ?' I answered ' A man, and so are you.'"

in their birth-rights.”¹ According to him in India as well as in other countries, originally there was natural equality and perfect freedom. Subversion of this equality has been the cause of degradation of India. The Brahmana priests were responsible for overthrowing the original equality. They sowed “the seeds of division, alienation, disorder and anarchy, disserving the joint and aggregate interests of the commonwealth into separate and jarring elements, connected with the rivalry of clanship, and the hostility of religious sectarianism, to which our country has been more or less a prey in the course of successive eras, and which were first introduced by an ambitious and domineering priesthood, and subsequently upheld and sanctified by ignorance and error, tending to stultify human reason, lest it should remind men of their right to think for themselves, and to strip them of their physical strength, lest they should be able to assert their native dignity?” Raja Rammohun Roy never accused the Brahmans of such designs.

¹ “Bengal Harukaru,” 2nd March, 1843. Dakshinaranjan’s essay on “The Present State of the East India Company’s Criminal Judicature, and Police under the Bengal Presidency,” forms the source of our information, where no other reference is given. A summary of this essay was published in the “Harukaru” on the 13th February, 1843. The essay was published in full in the “Harukaru” of the 2nd and 3rd March, 1843.

Dakshinaranjan, the disciple of Derozio, here got the better of Dakshinaranjan, the son of a high class Brahman. Dakshinaranjan's paper was read early in 1843, and the theory he advanced about the cause of the loss of equality and the consequent degradation of India finds acceptance in the History of Civilisation in England by Henry Thomas Buckle, who started writing his book from 1844. It is not unlikely that Dakshinaranjan's essay, which created so great a commotion at that time, was read by Buckle. Bankimchandra in his essays on Equality repeated the theory, advanced by Dakshinaranjan, but it is almost certain that he had not read the latter's paper, lying buried in the old files of the "Harukaru."

The writer who attached so much importance to the theory of equality would certainly chafe at the treatment accorded to respectable Indians by some English officials. Dakshinaranjan observes:—"The native Zamindar, equally with all his countrymen, is well aware that generally, in holding epistolary or personal intercourse with the Company's Covenanted officers, he must either adopt the character of an humble slave, or place himself in the predicament of meeting with gross insult and degradation. This kind of treatment, I need not observe, is, what no man will willingly expose himself to; for it is obviously repugnant to all ordinary feelings of self-respect—feelings by no means foreign to Asiatics or Hindoos."

The influence of the French Revolutionary doctrines is apparent in Dakshinaranjan's theory of the origin and object of Government. He believed in natural rights for the maintenance of which Government was called into existence. He thus stated the origin of Government : " When men first laboured to raise themselves out of a condition of barbarism, it was at once apparent, that certain conventional rules and restrictions were indispensable for giving consistence to a plan, that confessedly sought the general advantage. The first consideration which arose was, probably, how security and protection of admitted rights between man and man, could be attained and rendered permanent. A code, rude in its outline, but embracing sufficient for the wants of the age, at a period when civilisation was in its infancy, was framed and became understood in its aggregate form, by what we still comprehend as the basis of all that we designate government. These regulations, according to the spirit of the constitution, were characterised by more or less direct influence on the welfare and claims of the people at large. It was presently perceived, that no government could be lasting, not even the most despotic, which did not exercise a large portion of its authority for the guardianship of the helpless and indigent, from the encroachments of the wealthy and powerful. Thus, at the outset of social advancement, it was acknowledged, that all governments were bound,

conformably to the tenor of the laws under which they were called into existence, to render equal justice to their subjects.”

As regards the object of government he held “that the maxim we have insisted on, *viz.*, that governments are for the good of the many, and not the few, is a catholic one.”

He did not attach much importance to the form of government, nor did he want the subversion of the British rule in India. He declared that ‘he was no enemy to British rule, nor to any other rule that was upright and impartial. He would say with Pope :—

“For forms of government let fools contest,
Whate’er is best administered is best.”¹

But at the same time he dilated upon the evils of subjection to foreigners. He complained in his essay, referred to above, that foreigners rule a subject country “for the gratification of their love of gold, seldom, unhappily actuated by the philanthropic desire of promoting the welfare of the native races.” He attributed the poverty of India to foreign subjection. “It is undeniable, that if all our forests and mountains were peopled and turned into cities and villages, the internal resources of India are so vast and abundant, that if the

¹ *Bengal Harukaru*, 13th February, 1843. He said this in reply to Captain Richardson’s objections to the remarks he had made in his essay.

country were governed according to a free and generous policy, it would be found capable of affording the inhabitants the means of plentifully supplying themselves with comforts...
... ..”

He complained of the corruption in the judicial department. Being carried away by the force of his own rhetoric he exaggerated the evils of the judicial system and stated: “It could not be denied that in these courts every man had his price, from the peon to the sheristadar. The entire process was one of extortion and corruption in which the weaker and poorer parties invariably went to the wall.” In a similar strain, he accused the Police of various charges of omission and commission.

The remedies which he suggested for these evils were two ;—Indianization of services and organisation of public opinion. According to him, want of knowledge of the country and of the people on the part of high officers was the main cause of the evils he complained of. On the 6th February, 1843, Dakshinaranjan delivered a speech at a meeting held in the garden house of Sreekissen Singh. In this lecture he asked :—
“ Was it not right and proper that those who necessarily knew so much of the country in consequence of their having been born and educated on the soil, should be permitted to share the places of trust and emolument, now

monopolised by Europeans, and contribute their aid in the due administration of the law? ” ¹.

Like Raja Rammohun Roy, Dakshinaraman too, relied on public opinion for the removal of the system of corruption and bribery, prevailing in the Mofussil courts. He held that the evil system would continue until Indians, “ to whom justice was so dear, undertake the work of exposure and reformation.” In his lecture at Sreekissen Singh’s garden house he declared that “ the time will soon come when such an amount of public opinion would exist as would remove the evils of which they complained.” ²

“ The Friend of India ” criticised this speech. In order to give a correct perspective of the period we quote below some lines from this criticism. “ The Friend of India ” quoted the view of Dakshinaraman on public opinion and observed : “ It is public opinion and not the fear of legal consequences, which keeps the Bench in England pure. That opinion is wanting here and nothing can supply the absence of it—no penalties, no rewards.....The more they (the educated Bengalees) examine the state of courts, the more will they discover, that the remedy of existing evils lies more in hands of the people, than of the government; that if public opinion

¹ ‘ Bengal Harukaru,’ February 9, 1843.

² *Ibid.*

in the circle of native society be once enlisted in the side of truth, honesty and justice, the defects of the European functionaries—and they are by no means few—will be little felt. Without this aid, the most strenuous efforts of the most benevolent administration must be comparatively inefficient.”¹

In 1870 Dakshinaranjan drew up a plan for constituting a representative Legislature. He proposed that in each province there should be a Provincial representative Council, “composed of government nominees and representatives of the people in equal numbers.” “These representatives should be appointed quinquennially, from the people of every district by electors possessing a reasonable property qualification, say at first, the income of Rs. 1,000 per annum. It should be the business of these Councils to check and examine the accounts to be furnished to them by all the departmental heads of the Provincial Governments, and to advise Government as to the proper mode of levying taxes, when the exigencies of the State may absolutely require it. There should also be a Supreme Council, to consist of members, one half of whom should be nominated by government and the other half by these provincial Councils, every provincial Council sending a member.”²

¹ ‘The Friend of India,’ February 16, 1843.

² ‘The Englishman,’ June 18, 1870.

V. Akshoy Kumar Dutta

(1820-1886).

(1) *Introductory.*

Akshoykumar Dutta inherited the spirit of philosophical speculation in the domain of politics from Raja Rammohun Roy, while Tarachand Chakravarty, Chandrasekhar Deb, Debendranath Tagore and other leaders of the first generation of public-spirited men devoted their attention to secure the practical administrative reforms, suggested by the Raja. Akshoykumar could not derive the advantage of personal inspiration from the Raja, because when he came to Calcutta at the age of ten years and three months, from his native village Chupi, near Nabadwip, Rammohun had already sailed for England. But in 1839 he came in contact with Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and became an active member of the Tattvabodhini Sabha. As a member of the Tattvabodhini Sabha and the Brahma Samaj, he must have acquired a deep knowledge of the philosophical principles of Raja Rammohun Roy. In the evening of his life he penned the greatest eulogy that has ever been written on Rammohun Roy.¹ He admits

¹ In the Introduction to the second volume of his "Bharatvarshiya Upasak Sampraday," he writes:—

there that he derived his love of scientific studies from Rammohun.¹ Akshoykumar conducted the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* as editor for twelve years from 1843 to 1855. He wrote in it a series of articles, which reveal to us the same spirit of dispassionate inquiry, same intense love for the country and especially for the poor peasants, and the same conception of the organic nature of society and the potential capacity of Government for making life better and more ethical that mark the writings of Raja Rammohun.²

Akshoykumar Dutta seems to have been intimately acquainted with the writings of Plato,

“your (Rammohun’s) contemporaries and especially the later generations of educated people have conferred on you the royal crown and have shouted forth your glory. You have vanquished those who had been reigning so long undisputably over the minds of the Hindus. So you are not simply a Raja but the Raja of Rajas.”

¹ “তুমি বিজ্ঞানের অনুকূল পক্ষে যে সুগভীর রণবাণ বাদন করিয়া গিয়াছ তাহাতে যেন এখনও আমাদের কর্ণকূহর ধ্বনিত করিতেছে।”

Introduction to Vol. II of ভারতবর্ষীয় উপাসক সম্প্রদায়।

² MM. Haraprasad Shastri writes of *Tattvabodhini Patrika* under the editorship of Akshoykumar: “*Tattvabodhini Patrika* was at that time the missionary of European culture in the whole of Bengal. Akshoykumar Dutta was the first writer to introduce western outlook and mentality among the Bengali youths. He is the first moral preceptor of New Bengal.” বর্তমান শতাব্দীর বাঙ্গলা সাহিত্য, pp. 11-12.

Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Comte, Laplace and Malthus. Not only does he mention their names frequently in course of his essays and discourses, but also quotes their opinions. His theories regarding education and the functions of government were greatly influenced by the views of the Greek philosophers; Locke's writings instilled in his mind the contractual theory of government; and Malthus directed his attention to the problem of checking the natural growth of population in India. Akshoykumar enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Srinath Ghosh, the son-in-law, and Anandakrishna Bose, the grandson of Raja Radhakanta Deb and thus got the opportunity of utilising the splendid library of the Shovabazar Raj family. Anandakrishna Bose was the most learned philosopher and linguist of his age and he had the unique privilege of teaching English to Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and Akshoykumar Dutta. Akshoykumar must have been influenced a good deal by the philosophical outlook of that great man, who unfortunately has not left behind him any legacy of his vast erudition.

The method of investigation followed by Akshoykumar differs fundamentally from that of Raja Rammohun Roy. The Raja drew his conclusions from actual historical events and experiences, while Akshoykumar reasoned from the general to the particular. The Raja's method was inductive, while Akshoykumar's method

was deductive. Akshoykumar was not dogmatic indeed, but he held that Nature with all its glories and beauties is the great original scripture, the study of which alone can reveal to man true knowledge and true religion.¹ From a careful study of Nature man can deduce the laws which regulate the whole universe. In his “Dharmaniti” and the “বাহ্য বস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার” he shows how Religion, Morality, Laws of Health and the Constitutional and Private Laws might all be derived from the Law of Nature. In order to discover the Law of Nature and to deduct from it all other laws relating to human life and society, the first thing necessary is the spirit of scientific enquiry, which again must emanate from pure rationalism. He writes: “Pure Rationalism is our teacher. Whatever has been discovered by Bhaskara and Aryabhatta, Newton and Laplace, is also a part of our scripture.”² He maintains that the man-made civil and constitutional laws should conform to the laws by which God is ruling over the universe.³ Unlike the writers of the ecclesiastical school of medieval Europe, Akshoykumar does not think that the Law of Nature has been finally discovered. He admits the possibility of discovery of truth in future and is ready to welcome

¹ ‘Tattvabodhini Patrika,’ 1773 Sakabda, Falgun.

² *Ibid*, Baisakh, 1777 Saka.

³ *Ibid*, Asvin, 1775 Saka.

as a part of Dharma.¹ So we cannot call Akshoykumar's views dogmatic by any means. What he means to convey is that laws should keep pace with the advance of science, which alone must be the norm for all human laws.

Raja Rammohun Roy was a practical reformer, so he did not think it expedient and wise to neglect the traditional culture of Indian society. He was fond of quoting the adage that one must not depend exclusively on *Shastras* only, but should apply the test of Reason to the Shastric injunctions. Akshoykumar, on the other hand, was a theorist and as such he wanted to see the triumph of pure rationalism in all kinds of social relations. The Raja admitted the possibility of the *Saiva* form of marriage in some cases in modern India. Akshoykumar went farther ahead. He not only advocated widow-remarriage, inter-caste marriage and courtship before marriage and denounced marriage before puberty, but also appealed to the laws of nature to prove that divorce should be sanctioned in case of adultery on the part of either party and even in the case of cruelty and incompatibility of temperament between the partners in marriage.² In another respect Akshoykumar differed from the views held by the Raja. The Raja was friendly to the indigo-planters, because he thought that

¹ *Ibid*, Baisakh, 1777 Saka.

² *Dharmaniti* (11th edition), pp. 84-86.

when a large number of cultured Englishmen would settle in India, they would join hands with the Indians in effecting the amelioration of the social and political condition of India.¹ But twenty years later Akshoykumar held that the indigo-planters were one of the two greatest enemies of Ryots in Bengal. These indigo-planters were unfit to be called gentlemen.² It became a serious problem in the fifties of the last century to rescue the Ryots from the iron grip of the planters. In the history of indigo agitation of Bengal the names of Harishchandra Mukherjee, Dinabandhu Mitra, Rev. J. Long, Vishnucharan Biswas and Digambar Biswas are gratefully remembered by the Bengali people, but it was Akshoykumar Dutta, who first of all pleaded for the helpless Ryots through the pages of the 'Tattvabodhini Patrika.'

¹ In a public meeting held in the Town Hall on the 15th Dec., 1829, Raja Rammohun said, "I found the natives residing in the neighbourhood of indigo-plantations evidently better clothed and better conditioned than those who lived at a distance from such stations. There may be some partial injury done by the indigo-planters; but on the whole, they have performed more good to the generality of the natives of this country than any other class of Europeans whether in or out of the service."—*Asiatic Journal*, June, 1830.

² 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Agrahayan, 1772 Saka.

(2) Society and Individual.

Like Aristotle Akshoykumar holds that society is the product of instinct and not of reasoning or contract.¹ We have shown before how Raja Rammohun Roy steered clear of the revolutionary shibboleths of social contract theory; his disciple Akshoykumar, too, perceived by his keen intellect that man cannot create society by making contractual arrangements. The Scotch philosopher Adam Ferguson (1723-1818), and the French socialist Fourier too wrote against the contract theory, which was so much in vogue in contemporary Europe. Akshoykumar writes that as it is the nature of bees to live together and work in co-operation with one another, so it is the instinct of man, which impels him to live in association with others. Life in society promotes happiness and prosperity. An isolated bee can, indeed, gather plenty of honey from a garden but it cannot derive that much of efficiency in work and comfort in life which it could have got in the society of other bees. Exactly similar is the case with man. Akshoykumar maintains that as God has implanted in man faculties like affection, pity and devotion, man must live in association with

¹ Dharmaniti, Ch. V, pp. 50-51.

বাহ্য বস্তু সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার, Vol. II, p. 22 (5th Edition).

others in rural and urban communities to attain a nobler life through the fulfilment of these faculties.

Akshoykumar was a believer in the organismic theory of society, which has played such a prominent part in the history of political thought in the West in the nineteenth century. He writes that as the different parts of a watch are distinct from one another, but at the same time, are related most closely, so every man has got a distinct individuality of his own, and yet is closely related to the whole of human society. Such being the case, society appears to him a beautiful mechanism.¹

If the individual be only a part of the great organism, called society, the good of the individual must consist in the good of the whole society. Akshoykumar admits with Bentham that selfishness is an inherent characteristic of humanity; but the self-interest of a man can only be advanced when the society has progressed proportionately. God desires that there should be all-round progress for all; so he has implanted in the heart of every man the instinct of self-interest, and has so arranged that the interest of one should depend

¹ Dharmaniti, Ch. V, pp. 50-51.

“এই কোলাহল পরিপূর্ণ জনাকীর্ণ জনসমাজ একটি সুশৃঙ্খলাসম্পন্ন পরম রমণীয় যন্ত্রস্বরূপ, প্রত্যেক মানুষ তাহার এক এক চক্রস্বরূপ। সেই সমস্ত মানবরূপ চক্র পরস্পর সংশ্লিষ্ট থাকিয়া কার্য করে কদাপি স্বতন্ত্র থাকিতে পারে না।”

on the interest of others. If one tries to pursue his own interest at the sacrifice of the larger interest of the community, he would meet with nothing but failure. The object of all social codes is to bring about improvement in the condition of the general mass of the people; one of the chief means of realising this object is the pursuit of enlightened self-interest by each individual. So far as this part of the argument is concerned, it sounds like the old politico-economic theory of the *Laissez-faire* school. But nothing can be more distasteful to Akshoykumar than the *Laissez-faire* theory, which he abjured totally in his discussions on the functions of Government. He maintains that along with the love of self-interest, altruism is also a strong feeling in human mind. He finds that in the heart of every man is written distinctly the great Upanisadic adage: "One should look to the good of others as of one's own self."¹ If these two principles of self-interest and altruism work together harmoniously, each and every individual of the community may become happy and prosperous. Akshoykumar was

¹ 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' No. 137, 1 Paush, 1776 Saka. Dharmaniti (This and many other portions of the Dharmaniti, as published in the journal of the Tattvabodhini Sabha, have not been included in the published book. The author intended to publish a second volume of the Dharmaniti, but he could not do so owing to a severe and incurable malady).

conscious of the fact that men are not generally guided by the principle of enlightened self-interest. Innumerable evils follow from the lack of harmonious blending of self-interest and altruism. As an instance, he shows how people remain callously indifferent when a king plunges headlong into a war of conquest. When the war actually takes place hundreds of thousands of men of both the parties suffer terribly and lose their lives. Had they been conscious of the close identity between their own individual interest and the interest of the state and had they been able to make the rulers conform to the principles of law and justice, those harmful events would never have taken place.

Having thus established the close identity of interest between society and individual, Akshoykumar shows how the existence of poverty of the masses is detrimental to the interest of the whole society. If no attempt is made to alleviate the misery of the poor, the number of dull and inefficient men would increase, drunkenness would prevail to a larger extent, and the number of ignorant men would also multiply. These men would certainly not benefit the society; they would rather be extremely harmful to it. They would become thieves and robbers and thus bring about insecurity of property. They would not know anything about the laws of health, and even if they knew, would not be able to maintain them because of their poverty.

So these poor and ignorant people would become unhealthy and diseased. If the poor break the physical laws and in consequence suffer from contagious diseases, their rich and prosperous neighbours would not remain unaffected. The epidemic would fall equally upon the rich and poor, educated and ignorant, gentle and rude. By such a chain of arguments does Akshoykumar graphically illustrate the organic nature of society. If one member of it is weak or diseased it will affect adversely other members too. He concludes by saying that it is the interest of every one to promote the interest of others.¹ It is to be noted here that these essays were written in the early years of the fifth decade of the last century, when the *Laissez-faire* theory was triumphant in Europe and that enlightened consciousness of identity of interest between the individual and society, which led to the inauguration of the policy of state socialism, had not dawned upon the mind of statesmen of any country.

Akshoykumar further emphasises the old Hindu doctrine that as soon as a man is born in this world, he is burdened with certain obligations, which he must fulfil. Amongst these binding obligations are the duty to keep one's own health, to educate himself and his children, and to promote the interest of others in such a way as to

¹ 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' No. 140, Chaitra, 1776 Saka.

contribute to the progress of society. If a man wants to be happy in life, he must fulfil these obligations.¹ Akshoykumar thus employed his vast erudition in western Ethics and Hindu Morals to rouse the spirit of public consciousness, which was so sadly wanting in Bengal in the mid-Victorian era.

(3) His Views on Government.

Akshoykumar maintains that there is a close inter-relation between the character of society and the form and nature of government. Where government is not efficient and where there is no reign of law, people are bound to depend on one another and they live in groups, arranged into clans. In such a country, people claiming descent from one particular *gotra* or clan regard themselves as belonging to one family. This kind of social system prevails amongst the Arabs, Tartars, Turkomans and other similarly situated peoples. He is of opinion that the joint family system in India might be the product of the peculiar political condition of this country. But where government takes under its wings every individual in the state, where life and property is rendered secure by its efficiency and impartiality,

clannish grouping gives way to the individualistic system of social organisation.¹

He asserts that government is the representative body of the subjects.² It has got no inherent right to tax the people. The subjects have natural rights over their own life and property. Government is entitled to tax the people only with a view to protecting their life, honour and property. Here he complains that the British Indian Government does not fulfil its obligation to the subjects, as is evidenced by the misery of the Ryots in the Mofussils.³

Akshoykumar holds that the interest of the individual is inextricably mixed up with the interest of the whole community to which one belongs. Then again, government is nothing but the representative of the subjects, constituting the community. So government must extend its sphere of activity to include all those matters, which bring one individual in contact with another, or which are required to be done by the combined efforts of the many. In his opinion, government should not only protect life and property of citizens and seek to advance their material prosperity, but also look to the physical, moral and spiritual improvement

¹ Dharmaniti, Ch. X, pp. 169-170.

² 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' No. 122, Aswin, 1775 Saka.

³ *Ibid*, Shraban, 1772 Saka.

of the people. If the people be ignorant of the laws of health, they would fall a prey to diseases and would not be able to fulfil their social obligations. If one man be attacked with disease others might be contaminated. So the government should take steps to impart knowledge about the laws of health to every citizen. Then again, if the passions of an individual be not brought under proper control of intellect and morality, incalculable harm might be done by him to the society; so government should undertake the moral and intellectual education of the people. If these facilities are not given to the subjects, the debt which government owes to the people would remain unpaid. As the government should maintain peace and order, so should it educate the subjects in all kinds of physical and mental sciences. The object of government ought to be to make the people healthy, happy, educated and prosperous. The best way of fulfilling these objects is to impart a sound education to the people.¹

As a disciple of Raja Rammohun Roy and the friend of Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Akshoykumar felt no hesitation in invoking the aid of the government in effecting social reforms. As early as 1855 Akshoykumar put forth a strong plea for raising the age of marriage by legislative

¹ 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' No. 122, Aswin, 1775 Saka.

enactment. He asserts that in ancient India men used to marry at a mature age after completing the course of studies, extending over 36, 24, 18 or 12 years; and women married at an age when they were in a position to select their own husbands. He cites the example of Germany, where the marriageable age of men was fixed at 25 and of women at 18; and where the man was to satisfy the clergy and the magistrate of his capability of maintaining his wife in reasonable ease and comfort. He holds that such a rule should also obtain in our country, otherwise there is absolutely no prospect of the dawning of an era of prosperity in India. He further adduces physiological and eugenic reasons to prove the harmfulness of early marriage. He cites the law of Lycurgus, the views of Aristotle and Plato, and the expert opinion of medical men to prove the advisability of marriage after the attainment of maturity. He admits the necessity of varying the age of marriage according to climate and so does not like the fixing of the marriageable age according to the standard of cold countries. But he holds it to be an essential duty of government to fix the minimum age of marriage in a country like India.¹ He also condemns polygamy in the severest terms possible. In this matter, however, he thinks it disgraceful on the part of the people that the

¹ Dharmasutras, Ch. V, pp. 59-62.

initiative in abolishing this evil practice has been taken by the government instead of by the people themselves. As an exponent of the societarian views, Akshoykumar holds it to be a legitimate function of government to regulate family affairs. According to him in case of adultery or cruelty on the part of either partner, law and social custom should sanction the dissolution of the marriage tie. In advocating the introduction of divorce in the Hindu social system, Akshoykumar did not take into his consideration the fact that marriage is regarded as a sacrament and not a contract by the Hindus. By the way, it may be mentioned here that the genesis of the movement which culminated in the passing of the so-called Brahma Marriage Bill should be traced from the publication of the "Dharmaniti."

(4) His Views on Education.

Akshoykumar Dutta and Bhudeva Mukhopadhyay were the greatest exponents of the theory of education in the nineteenth century in Bengal. Akshoykumar first served as a teacher of the Tattvabodhini Pathshala at Bansbaria in 1840 A.D. From that time he must have constantly pondered over the problem of educating the masses. In his Dharmaniti we get a complete theory of education, which he thought suitable for the country. The publication of the Dharmaniti

almost synchronises with his acceptance of the post of Headmaster of the newly established Calcutta Normal School. Almost all his writings were adopted as text-books in Bengal and through these books he exerted the most profound influence on Young Bengal.

Akshoykumar attached the greatest importance to education, because he believed that education alone, in the right sense of the term, could remove all the social, political and economic evils from which Bengal was suffering. In the Hare Memorial meeting, held at the Faujdari-Balakhana Hall on the 1st June, 1845, he ascribed the re-birth of public spirit in Bengal to the invigorating spirit of western education.¹

¹ Dr. Mahendralal Sircar's pamphlet "David Hare and the Obligations of the Hindu Community to promote Scientific Education," 1876, Appendix. Akshoykumar's speech is thus reported in it: "Time was, said he, when Hindus were so utterly incapable of appreciating the utility of public works that they would not have subscribed a pice to promote them—when they understood nothing except what related to the glorification of their animal wants. A better day had, however, dawned upon his fatherland. Though the great mass of his countrymen were still destitute of all public spirit, and pre-eminently distinguished by apathy and lukewarmness, yet there was a large and increasing number of educated and intelligent natives who were not open to these charges..... Many of them were laudably exerting themselves to improve and elevate their country, they had established societies for ameliorating its moral and political

We have shown above how Akshoykumar proved that the most important function of Government, next to the maintenance of peace and order is the imparting of education. In his *Dharmaniti* he reiterates the view, and further adds that Government cannot even maintain peace and order efficiently without educating the citizens.¹ He holds that there should be provision for compulsory education for all children up to the age of fifteen. Children of even the poorest citizens should not be apprenticed to any trade or occupation without this education.² From this it is quite clear that he wanted the introduction of free and compulsory education in India. This is rather surprising in view of the fact that even in England such a system did not obtain recognition, when Akshoykumar published his *Dharmaniti*, in 1855. As regards the financing of this scheme of free and compulsory education, Akshoykumar asserts that if once the Government

condition; they had set on foot the educational institutions for disseminating the blessings of that education which they had themselves received, and which, they knew, was the grand remedial agent for all the evils of their country. Babu Akshoykumar Dutta then dwelt upon the happy effects likely to accrue from the present altered state of things brought about by the labours of that zealous and indefatigable friend of native education, the late David Hare."

¹ *Dharmaniti*, Ch. VII, p. 141.

² *Ibid*, Ch. VIII, p. 139.

be convinced of the supreme importance of it, there would be no dearth of necessary funds.¹ If the Government check its passion for making war, that is, curtail military expenditure, and if the rich men of this country abstain from the frivolous and harmful pleasures on which they spend money, there would be no lack of funds for imparting education to all.² He urges the necessity of public co-operation for achieving this great object. In his short-lived monthly magazine entitled, the 'Vidyadarshan,' which he used to edit before his connection with the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* had begun, he bewailed the want of educational establishments in many of the villages. He recommended the Government to raise subscriptions among the people of those villages and believed that the people would gladly and spontaneously contribute for maintaining them. He proposes that these collections should be handed over to the Council of Education, under whose guidance the schools were to be established and maintained.³

He prepared an elaborate scheme for the different stages of education. The most noticeable feature of this scheme is the recommendation for sending children to schools at the age of two. These schools should be of such a type as to make

¹ Dharmaniti, p. 144.

² 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Aswin, 1775 Saka.

³ 'Vidyadarshana,' No. 4, 1842.

the children believe them to be play-grounds. Here by practical demonstrations the children are to be taught cleanliness and the other elementary laws of health. They are to learn here the plan of living and acting in co-operation with others. Various natural and manufactured articles are to be brought before them and explained. Their latent good qualities are to be evoked by the conversation and example of the teacher. If any child manifests in his behaviour any kind of baseness, he or she should not go unpunished. But the punishment is not to be corporal in character and must not be awarded by the teacher alone. In case of any transgression of duty on the part of any child, the teacher is to convene a Panchayat of all the children and he himself is to act as the president or judge. If the offender is censured by such a body, it will not only make him ashamed of his own conduct, but also will set a salutary example before others. In this type of school object lessons and arithmetic are to be given greater importance than mere spelling and other purely mechanical things. The teachers of this type of schools are first to learn the science of teaching in Normal Schools and then to engage themselves in shaping and moulding the character of the future citizens.¹

The next type of schools are meant for children from the age of six or seven to fourteen or fifteen.

¹ Dharmaniti, pp. 124-129.

The school compound should contain shady trees, bowers, and various plants, amidst which some seats are to be provided. In the bye-paths of the groves and bowers, statues of men like Socrates, Bacon, Newton, Franklin, Pascal, Washington, Aryabhata, Bhaskaracharya, Rammohun and others should be placed. Mottos containing truths of physical science, ethics and religion should be inscribed in wooden slabs and placed at short distance from one another.¹ In the secondary stage lessons on Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Geography, History, Languages and Literature are to be imparted. Pictures, drawings, and practical demonstrations are to form the chief means for conveying education. He warns against the general tendency of text-books in history of holding up the lives of war-maniac, cruel enemies of humanity like Cæsar, Alexander and Bonaparte as ideal before the students. In his opinion, character of such conquerors should be depicted in such a way as to create an aversion to war, enviousness and greediness in the minds of the readers. He attaches great importance to the physical training of students. He shows how many of the civilised nations have disappeared from the face of the earth for want of physical

¹ From reading this description one is tempted to think that Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and Rabindranath got some inspiration from Akshoykumar's writings in establishing the Bolepur School.

prowess. He maintains that the lower instincts and physical strength which impel a nation to fight against the invaders, should not be allowed to deteriorate.¹

In the third type of schools only the selected few should be admitted and they should continue their studies up to the twentieth or twenty-second years of age. For the majority of students, however, Akshoykumar would like to provide technical and vocational education, instead of theoretical university education. In his opinion the Government should establish and maintain schools of technology as well as of agriculture. In the former engineering, ship-building and the process of manufacturing instruments should be taught. He also appealed to the Government for opening libraries and reading rooms in every village.²

Raja Rammohun Roy was the strongest advocate of the English language as the medium of higher education. Akshoykumar Dutta, on the other hand, put forward a well-reasoned plea on behalf of the vernacular as the medium of the higher, secondary and primary education. He shows how difficult it is to learn the foreign tongue and how the poorer classes cannot afford to spend the time necessary for picking up knowledge of the English language. He argues that the knowledge imparted

¹ বাহ্য বস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার, Vol. II, p. 60.

² Dharmaniti, pp. 136-41.

through the medium of vernacular filters down to the lowest strata of society, but the knowledge imparted in a foreign tongue necessarily remains confined to a few educated men. Moreover, many of those who have learnt through the medium of the English, have begun to hate the language, culture and people of their own country. They have become completely denationalised.¹ The cost of education through the medium of English is four times heavier than the cost of education through the medium of vernacular. It might be objected that there is no good text-book in the Bengali language. But Akshoykumar answers the objection by stating that the best books of writers like Bacon, Locke, Newton, Laplace and Humboldt might be translated and the highest type of education might be imparted in vernacular. But he does not want that the study of the English language and literature should be given up. He also demands that all the transactions of the Government should be carried in vernacular. In conclusion he reiterates his conviction that the Government alone is able to spread education widely amongst the people ; and it is the essential duty of the Government to take up the problem energetically.²

¹ “জন্মভূমির হীন অবস্থা মোচনের বন্ধ না করিয়া তাহার প্রতি অনাদর করা, জননীর জীর্ণ শরীর সুস্থ না করিয়া তাহার প্রতি অশ্রদ্ধা করা—ইহা অপেক্ষা হৃদয় বিদীর্ণকারী ব্যাপার আর কি আছে।”—তত্ত্ব-বোধিনী পত্রিকা, শ্রাবণ, ১৭৭০ শক।

² Ibid., “গবর্ণমেন্টের ইহাতে উৎসাহের সহিত সচেষ্ট হওয়া

(5) Theory of Punishment.

In 1855 A.D. Akshoykumar Dutta wrote a series of articles on the theory of punishment in the 'Tattvabodhini Patrika.' In the second volume of his বাহ্য বস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার he further explained the theory. In his old age, amidst great physical suffering he continued to take a lively interest in the lot of the poor criminals. He studied in 1879 the Administrative Report on the Jails of Bengal for 1871-78 and came to the conclusion that in spite of the severe punishment of crimes, the number of criminals was gradually increasing, as is shown from the fact that in 1871 there were 57,926 prisoners, while in 1878 the number increased to 78,045.¹

When he first published his articles on the theory of punishment in the 'Tattvabodhini Patrika' the treatment towards the prisoners in Bengal jails was, indeed, very harsh and unscientific. In 1835 Mr. Hutchinson published "The Report on the Medical Management of the Native Jails throughout the territories subject to the Government of Fort William and Agra." In it he cited

নিতান্ত কর্তব্য, কারণ প্রজাদিগের বিজ্ঞাদান রাজকার্যের প্রধান অঙ্গ হইয়াছে। * * * রাজার এক আজ্ঞাতে বাহা হইবে সহস্র সহস্র প্রজার যুগপৎ চেষ্টাতেও তাহা সম্পন্ন হওয়া দুষ্কর।"

¹ Bharatbarshiya Upasak Sampraday, Vol. II, Introduction.

the example of a jail, where out of 600 prisoners, 166 died in 1829. He described the prisons as "splendid sepulchres." The prisoners had to work outdoor in rain and in the sun from sunrise to four o'clock in the afternoon, with an interval of one hour for cooking their food, for procuring which they were given each two to three pice per day. In 1836 a committee on prisons, presided over by Lord Macaulay, came to the conclusion that a jail should be made as much a place of terror as possible, and that labour should be tedious and irksome, that the food supplied should be scantiest in amount, and coarsest in quality that could sustain life, and that as much of pain should be inflicted as could be borne without injury to health or risk to life. In 1843 the 'Bengal Harukaru' condemned the severity of prison discipline in Bengal.¹ This severity of prison discipline attracted the attention of Akshoykumar. He held that people commit crimes because of their evil passions. If the object of punishment is to diminish the number of crimes and criminals, an enquiry should be carefully

¹ "Unjust severity, in the adjudication of punishments, defeats its own object in two ways. It creates sympathy towards offenders, which is bad, and it tends to render men reckless in the commission of crime." *Harukaru*, January 12, 1843. This line of argument was adopted by all the Bengali writers on Punishment in the nineteenth century.

made as to the causes which give rise to evil passions in the minds of criminals. But such a procedure has not been adopted in any state of the world. Consequently, even the severest type of punishment has failed to check the ever-increasing number of crimes everywhere in the world. The spirit of revenge has been the mainspring of punishment. The motto of politics has been to exalt the noble-minded and suppress the evil-minded people. But the modern idea of the humanitarian philosophers is that even the latter class should receive protection and moral improvement from the government. Criminals are diseased persons, and as such require medical and moral treatment, and not punishment. But they should be kept confined, lest they carry on their nefarious work and contaminate others by their example. They should be given moral and religious education and should be trained to active habits. Some provision should be made for training them in a profession, which might enable them to earn their livelihood after their release.¹ It might be mentioned here that Dr. F. J. Mowat, M.D., who was appointed the Inspector-General of Prisons in Lower Bengal in 1855, converted the jails under his care into schools of industry. But he "abandoned as useless and hopeless all attempts at moral reformation," which he regarded "as a delusion"²

¹ 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Baisakh, 1777 Saka.

² Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association,

Akshoykumar Dutta thought capital punishment useless and barbarous. It is useless because it has not been able to prevent murder. A man commits murder under temporary insanity and he does not care for his own life. It has often been seen that a man after having committed murder puts an end to his own life. To sentence such persons to death is inhuman. Akshoykumar does not support banishment too, because the exile can mix with bad people, live an idle life and indulge in his evil passions without the salutary fear of social retribution.¹

(6) His Views on British Indian Administration.

Akshoykumar published his last book, the second volume of "Bharatbarshiya Upasak Sampraday," forty-six years after the death of Raja Rammohun Roy. During these forty-six years many of the hopes entertained by the Raja regarding the benefits of the British Indian administration had been frustrated. So it was not possible for Akshoykumar to be as much friendly as the Raja had been towards the Government. Besides this, there was another reason for his dissatisfaction with the Government. He was an idealist ;

1869, Dr. Mouat's article on "Crime, Criminals and Prison Discipline in Bengal."

¹ 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Jaishtha, 1777 Saka.

he held it to be the main object of government to promote the moral and material condition of the subjects ; but he found the number of criminals steadily increasing, and the peasants sinking into wretchedness and degradation. With undue severity, he criticises the Government and brings against it the charge that under it the people have suffered in health, longevity, strength and religion.¹ His chief ground of complaint against the British Indian administration was the insecurity of life and property of the poor Ryots. In a series of articles in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* he brought before the educated public the miserable condition of the Ryots in the Mufussils ; and blamed the Government for its failure to provide for their safety.²

Amongst the other specific charges brought by him against the Government were the existence of the Excise Department, high price of all articles, and the loss of health of those who enter schools and colleges. On the face of it, some of these charges are frivolous in character, no doubt.

In the fifties of the last century he had inculcated the doctrine of all-comprehensive functions

¹ 'Bharatbarshiya Upasak Sampraday,' Vol. II, Introduction.

² 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Baisakh, Shraban and Agrahayan of 1772 Saka. These articles might have been inspired by the writing of Pearycharan Mitra in the *Calcutta Review*, July, 1846.

of government. He had stressed the duties and obligations of government to the comparative neglect of the obligations of the subjects. Unlike Bankimchandra he did not attempt to rouse the community to the sense of its duty to itself. The result of such an utter dependence on government is seen from Akshoykumar's writings in 1879, when he was suffering from acute head troubles. In 1879, he made a pathetic appeal to the Government for removing the abuses he complained of. He appealed to the philanthropy and pity of the English public to make enquiries into the grievances of poor Indians who, in his opinion, had lost even the power of representing their own misery. He writes, "Goethe died with the words 'light, more light,' we too in the dying condition are crying, England, pity, more pity."¹ He also appealed to the sense of moral obligation of the English people towards the Indians. He asserts that as we by our counsel and intrigue have placed the English in the position of sovereign authority and have gladly tendered to their care our life and property, it is their duty to promote our interests by all means."²

¹ 'Bharatbarshiya Upasak Sampraday,' Vol. II, Introduction.

² *Ibid.*

"আমরা মন্ত্রণা বলে তোমাকে রাজসিংহাসনে অধিষ্ঠিত করিয়া রাজ-মুকুট প্রদান করিয়াছি ও প্রীতমনে তোমাকে ধনপ্রাণ সমর্পণ করিয়া বশতাপন্ন হইয়া রহিয়াছি।"

Raja Rammohun would have been satisfied with an equal partnership in the British Empire. Akshoykumar, however, regarded dependence in any form on others as the most terrible suffering. He asserts with great flourish of rhetoric that the Naraka of the Hindus, Hell of the Christians and the Jahannam of the Mussalmans is not as terrible as dependence.¹

(7) His Ideal.

We have shown above that Akshoykumar was an idealist. He proved the interrelation between individual and society and preached that the well-being of an individual depends on the well-being of the whole society. The best means of securing the moral, intellectual and material prosperity of a community is to eradicate poverty. He attributes crime, ignorance, disease and vices to poverty. He is grieved to find glaring inequality prevailing among the different members of the community.² He asserts that the capitalists of every country desire that they should enjoy the best things of the world and others should work as slaves for ministering to their comforts. In a society where the majority of the people are forced to labour day and night for maintaining a minority in luxury, there can be no social progress. God

¹ *Ibid.*

² 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Paush, 1776 Saka.

has given intellect and religiosity to all classes of people. But poverty deprives the labouring classes from the opportunity of improving these splendid gifts of God. The rich and wise people should, therefore, try to afford opportunity to the labouring classes to improve their knowledge and piety. The Government, too, should make such laws as would be conducive to the well-being of these classes.¹

Akshoykumar is of opinion that poverty is due to weakness of mind, early marriage, superstitious rites, intoxication, oppression of landlords, commercial revolution and natural causes like flood, etc.² He also discusses the theory of Malthus and maintains that the increase of population over the means of subsistence is a potent cause of poverty. Hence he advises that those people only should marry who are in a position to maintain their family in comforts.³

He suggests several means for removing poverty. He does not like that the wealthy classes should be forcibly deprived of their wealth and reduced to the status of the poor. He wants that the poorer classes should be made richer. This can be done by three means. First, education

¹ বাহ্য বস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার, Vol. II, pp. 45-46.

² 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Chaitra, 1776 Saka.

³ বাহ্য বস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার, Vol. II, pp. 25-27.

conducive to the moral and material improvement of the poor, should be imparted freely and compulsorily to all. When properly educated, the poor can effect their own moral, physical, intellectual and material improvement. Secondly, law and custom should be made favourable to the well-being and comfort of the poorer classes. Thirdly, efforts should be made to invent labour-saving machines, which will enable men to produce food and clothes, sufficient for the requirement of the community. If such machines are employed, every class of people will get enough of leisure, which they would utilise in satisfying their intellectual curiosity and religious instinct.¹ Akshoykumar thus envisages an industrial state, in which the citizens will produce material things, necessary for existence, within the shortest time possible, and where equitable laws of distribution will leave every one of them sufficient time to cultivate knowledge and religion.

¹ 'Tattvabodhini Patrika,' Paush, 1776 Saka.

“আমরা শিল্পযন্ত্রের সম্পাদন বিষয়ে যত সমর্থ হইব, বিষয়কর্মের কাল ন্যূন করিয়া বুদ্ধি ও ধর্ম প্রবৃত্তি চরিতার্থ করিবার নিমিত্ত ততই অবসর প্রাপ্ত হইতে পারিব।”

This hope can be realised only when there is an equitable distribution of wealth between capital and labour. Akshoykumar has made provision for such distribution by his second condition.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL DISCIPLES OF RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY.

I. Introduction.

Raja Rammohun Roy left behind him not only a philosophical school and a religious sect, but also a school of politicians, who tried their level best to carry out the political programme of the first great apostle of modern India. We have shown in the previous chapter that the philosophical radicals too were influenced by the political ideas of the Raja. But while the Philosophical Radicals, drunk deep in the Revolutionary philosophy of France, insisted on the recognition of the 'natural rights,' and demanded radical reforms like the abolition of the political power of the East India Company and provision for free and compulsory education, the political disciples of Raja Rammohun Roy confined their attention to the remedy of specific grievances through constitutional agitation. They did not pay as much attention to the discussion of the theoretical questions like the origin, nature and function of government, state and society as the Philosophical Radicals did.

Amongst the disciples of the Raja, the most prominent were Prasannacoomar Tagore,

Dwarkanath Tagore, Debendranath Tagore, Ramgopal Ghosh, Pearychand Mitra, Kishorychand Mitra, Gobindachandra Dutta, Girishchandra Ghosh and Harishchandra Mukherjee. During the period between November 1830 (the date of the sailing of the Raja for England) and June 1861 (the date of the death of Harishchandra Mukherjee) the influence of these leaders was paramount in the public life of Bengal. Of these leaders, Debendranath Tagore and Harishchandra Mukherjee alone accepted the religious reform of the Raja; Gobindachandra Dutta became a Christian; while the rest remained within the fold of the old Hindu religion, though discarding much of the superstitions and prejudices connected with it. The first two of these leaders alone had the privilege of coming in close contact with the Raja but all of them were thoroughly conversant with the political ideas of the Raja. Prasannacoomar, Dwarkanath, Kishorychand and Harishchandra were the professed champions of the rights and privileges of the Zamindars indeed, but they were never prepared to sacrifice the interests of the Ryots at the altar of the supposed rights of the landlords. Like the barons of England in the reign of John, they tried to promote the interests of the Zamindars and at the same time to improve the condition of the Ryots and to look after the general welfare of the country.¹

¹ I do not support the theory of McKechnie that

I have hinted in the first chapter that along with the Raja, the Serampore missionaries also were making efforts to rouse the political consciousness of the literate classes of Bengal. As early as 1818, they explained the utility and importance of trial by jury and described how the Grand Jury and Petty Jury work in England.¹ In 1827 they advised the Bengal public to send a memorial to England to get the right to sit in the Grand Jury. They exhorted the Bengali people to try to get a share in the work of administration.² In answer to the argument of hostile critics that much corruption would follow if posts of responsibility were given to Indians, they wrote: "This fact does not prove that natives ought for ever to be excluded from responsible situations in the land of their birth."³

Being inspired by the example of Raja Rammohun Roy, Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, who had been associated with the Raja in the publication of the 'Sambad Kaumudi' and who had later on joined the orthodox Hindu party against the Raja, began to discuss specific grievances of the people in his paper, the 'Samachar Chandrika.'

the Magna Carta was a mere class-measure. See my "Rise and Development of the English Constitution" (Third edition).

✓ 'Samachar Darpan,' 27th June, 1818.

✓ *Ibid*, 16th June, 1827.

³ *Ibid*, 24th December, 1831.

A correspondent wrote in his paper : "To detect theft and to prevent the violence of rogues and robbers, the magistrates have appointed in the various Zillahs, police Darogas, Buksees, Moonsiffs, Muhurirs, and peons ; but these men inflict far greater distress on the poor inhabitants than either thieves or robbers can do, for when they come with great power and pomp, they seldom refrain from theft." ¹ The political questions which Bhabanicharan discussed in his paper are summarised in one of his articles, in which he wrote: " We have again and again made representations to Government and to the wealthy—that revenue might not be levied on rent-free lands, that all inconvenience might be removed respecting a place for burning the corpses of Hindoos in Calcutta, that in the Mofussil the people might be delivered from the oppression of the Daroga, that our countrymen might not become infidels, that instead of abandoning religion, they should devote themselves to its duties, that the costs of Supreme Court might be diminished, that provisions might be easily obtained, that hospitals might be established by Government for the sick poor both in the city and in other places, that by a subscription from wealthy persons funds might be raised for the relief of the

¹ 'Chandrika' quoted in the 'Samachar Darpan' of the 5th June, 1830.

• blind and the diseased, that the inconvenience of travellers might be removed, and various other things of similar nature.’’¹

✓ The crudeness of these demands is apparent. Neither the Serampore missionaries, nor the anti-Rammohun party made any systematic and organised effort to ameliorate the political and economic condition of the people. What characterised the disciples of the Raja from them was their wide outlook in politics, their enlightened criticism of Government policy and organised efforts to secure political rights. All the disciples of Raja Rammohun were highly educated persons; and they were able to enlist sympathy and active co-operation of the steadily increasing number of ‘English-educated’ persons. The “Samachar Darpan” informs us that in 1828, 400 children in the Hindu College, and in other institutions about 1,000 students were receiving English education.’² Mr. H. H. Wilson states in 1836 that when he left Calcutta, ‘there were about 6,000 youths studying English.’³

When Raja Rammohun Roy sailed for England Prasannacoomar Tagore and Dwarkanath Tagore took upon themselves the task of keeping alive the

✓ ‘Chandrika’ quoted in the ‘Samachar Darpan,’ Dec. 11, 1830.

² ‘Samachar Darpan,’ 26th June, 1828.

³ *Asiatic Journal*, ‘Education of the Natives of India,’ 1836, p. 12.

movement for political reform, set on foot by the Raja. Prasannacoomar started a paper called the 'Reformer.' Dr. Alexander Duff recognised that the paper belonged to the party of the Raja.¹ In 1833 the paper had a circulation of 400 copies, as against 100 copies of the 'Gyananneshun,' 373 copies the of 'India Gazette,' 175 copies of the 'Calcutta Courier,' 208 copies of the 'Bengal Chronicle,' 242 copies of the 'Bengal Herald,' 200 copies of the 'Indian Register,' 200 copies of the 'Enquirer,' and 934 copies of the 'Bengal Harukaru.'² From the above statement, it would appear that the 'Reformer' was one of the most

¹ Dr. Duff wrote: "The first established of these was the 'Reformer,' published exclusively in the English language. It excited, on its first appearance, an undoubted curiosity, chiefly from the circumstances of its being the first English newspaper ever conducted by natives. It represented the sentiments of a party not large in number but potent in rank and wealth, the party of the celebrated Raja Rammohun Roy." Quoted in Mr. S. C. Sanial's article on the 'History of the Press in India,' 'Calcutta Review,' January, 1911, p. 28.

² 'Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review,' 1833; Article on 'the Calcutta Press' by the editor of the 'John Bull,' pp. 405 ff. The writer gives the following account of the 'Reformer': "An arena of discussion on all questions connected with local politics, literature, religion, metaphysics, jurisprudence, and political economy. This paper circulates 400 copies, 100 of which are subscribed for the Europeans, and is thought to be very instrumental in promoting a taste for English composition amongst

influential journals of the time. Dwarkanath Tagore, on the other hand, had got from Rammohun the idea of promoting Indian interests through the agency of the newspapers conducted by Englishmen in India.¹ So, instead of starting an independent paper, he purchased large shares of the influential Anglo-Indian papers. He purchased the 'India Gazette' for 3,400 Rupees and joined it with the 'Bengal Chronicle.'² Subsequently, 'the India Gazette' was amalgamated with the 'Bengal Harukaru.' Kishorichand Mitra states that Dwarkanath purchased a considerable share of the 'Bengal Harukaru' with the object of counteracting "the savage and unscrupulous attacks of the 'John Bull' upon the natives."³

Prasannacoomar and Dwarkanath were not content with the advocacy of Indian cause through

the natives. The editor, an intelligent native gentleman, writes very well himself, but he does not take the trouble to correct the contribution of his countrymen. It is perfectly independent of any particular religious bias." The circulation of 'Samachar Darpan,' the most influential of vernacular papers, was 400 in 1836.—'Friend of India,' July 7, 1836.

¹ "In 1829 he (Rammohun) became, in conjunction with Dwarkanath Tagore and Neel Rutton Haldar, a proprietor of an English newspaper, the *Bengal Herald*."—*Asiatic Journal*, 1833. Article on Rammohun Roy.

² *Asiatic Intelligence*, April, 1835.

³ Kishorichand Mitra's *Memoirs of Dwarkanath Tagore* (revised and enlarged edition of 1870), p. 39.

the Press alone. They were trying to organise political associations too. Raja Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen were the two great opponents of Rammohun ; but four years after the death of the latter, Prasannacoomar, one of the chief co-adjutors of the Raja, joined with them in founding the Zamindary Association, the first organisation of Bengal, with a distinct political object. A meeting was held on the 12th November, 1837, at the Hindu College to take steps to establish an association of the landlords. A committee consisting of Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur, Ramkamal Sen, Bhabanicharan Mitra and Prasannacoomar Tagore, was entrusted with the task of framing rules for such an association. "The only instructions with which the members of the provisional committee were charged was, that, in preparing the rules, they should bear in mind that the association was intended to embrace people of all descriptions, without reference to caste, country, or complexion, and, rejecting all exclusiveness was to be based on the most universal and liberal principles; the only qualification to become its members, being the possession of interest in the soil of the country."¹ When the Association was established, the committee attempted to establish "branch societies in every district of the British Indian

¹'Reformer,' November 14, 1837, quoted in the Asiatic Journal.

• empire, with the view of establishing regular communications on all subjects, connected with
 • the object of the society.”¹ The political character of the Zamindary Association, later on known
 • as the Landholders’ Society, becomes apparent from a speech delivered in a meeting of the society, held on the 30th of November, 1839, by Mr.
 • Turton, who said: “It was not as a conquered
 • nation that he desired to retain the inhabitants of India as British subjects, but as brethren in
 • every respect; as constituting a part of the Kingdom of Britain, as fellow subjects—with the same
 • feelings, the same interests and objects, and the same rights as the British-born inhabitants of England. He admired the principle adopted of old by the Romans, of incorporating their conquests with Rome, and granting to the conquered the privileges of Roman citizens.”² Prasannacoomar

└¹ *Asiatic Intelligence*, July, 1838.

The object of the Association, as described in its prospectus, was ‘to promote the general interest of landholders: Its constitution was as follows:—Membership fee was to be Rs. 20 per year, and an entrance fee of Rs. 5 was to be paid by each member. The members were to elect by ballot a committee of 12 men, 4 of whom was to go out by rotation at the expiry of each year, and their places to be filled up by ballot. A general meeting was held every three months.

² ‘The Bengal Harukaru,’ Dec. 14 and 16, 1839, quoted in the ‘Memoirs of Dwarkanath.’ The opinion expressed by Mr. Turton is exactly the ideal of Raja Rammohun.

became the secretary to the Landholders' Society,¹ and Dwarkanath became its most prominent member. In the annual meeting of the British Indian Association, held on the 31st March, 1870, Kishorichand claimed that the Landholders' Society was founded chiefly through the efforts of Dwarkanath.

While Prasannacoomar and Dwarkanath were organising public opinion in India through the Landholders' Society, Mr. William Adam, another friend of Raja Rammohun, was making

In view of the fact that the Durham Report, the genesis of the Dominion Status idea, was not published before 1840, the ideal expressed above, seems remarkable.

¹ The Bengal 'Harukaru,' August 15, 1843. "The Landholders' Association gave no signs of existence" during the 12 months preceding the visit of George Thompson. "If we are not mistaken, it is the arrival of Mr. George Thompson, which has broken its long sleep." —'Friend of India,' 23rd February, 1843.

In the Prossunnocoomar Tagore Memorial Meeting held in the British Indian Association, Rajendralala Mitra said that "he (the speaker) looked upon it (the Landholders' Society) as the pioneer of freedom in this country. It gave to the people the first lesson in the art of fighting constitutionally for their rights, and taught them manfully to assert their claims and give expression to their opinions. Ostensibly, it advocated the rights of the Zamindars, but as their rights are intimately bound up with those of the ryots, the one cannot be separated from the other."—Raja Rajendralala Mitra's Speeches, edited by Raj Jogeshur Mitter (S. K. Lahiri, 1892), p. 25.

efforts to rouse the interests of the English public in Indian affairs. It was Mr. Adam, who took the initiative in establishing the British India Society in England in July, 1839.¹ Early in 1841 the Society published from London a journal, called the 'British India Advocate,' with Mr. Adam as editor.² On the 30th November, 1839, the Landholders' Society resolved to "co-operate with the British India Society in England." Dwarkanath took a leading part in the meeting. A committee was formed to correspond on behalf of the Landholders' Society with the London Society, the attention of which body was to be drawn to the following objects :—(1) The prevention of the resumption of rent-free tenures ; (2) the extension of the permanent settlement, or a measure of the same nature to all British India ; (3) the reform of the judicial, police and revenue systems, for the better protection of all classes of people ; (4) the granting of waste lands to occupants on equitable terms, so as to

¹ 'The Bengal Spectator,' 1843, p. 16. The object of the Society was stated to be "the improvement of the condition of the native population." Lord Brougham presided over the inaugural meeting.

For an account of the career of William Adam see "Bengal, Past and Present," 1914, April-June, p. 251 ff.

² 'The Bengal Spectator,' March 4, 1841. 'The Harukaru' described the journal as a small folio of eight pages with a 'repulsive physiognomy.'

encourage the application of capital to the soil of India.¹

It may be mentioned in this connection that Dwarkanath Tagore initiated the policy of subsidising the British public men to carry on agitation for Indian reform in England. He had seen the marvellous effect of the agitation, carried on there by his friend Raja Rammohun. As there was no Indian of the like calibre to advocate the cause of India to England, he thought it best to secure the services of some eminent public men in that country by paying them subsidy through public associations in Bengal. In a meeting of the Landholders' Society, held on the 17th July, 1843, at its office at 1, Chitpore Road, Dwarkanath announced that Mr. Thompson had consented to accept the office of Agent on behalf of the Society. Then Raja Radhakanta Deb proposed and Dwarkanath seconded the appointment of Thompson, and it was resolved to furnish the latter "with such materials as the Society may wish to bring to the notice of the authorities at Home." It is not distinctly stated whether any salary was voted to George Thompson. But from the proceedings of the British Indian Association it becomes clear that the Bengal public used to spend a comparatively

¹ 'Bengal Harukaru,' December 14 and 16, 1839, quoted in Kishorichand Mitra's 'Memoirs of Dwarkanath.'

large sum of money over their so-called 'agents' in England.¹

While Prasannacoomar, Dwarkanath and William Adam were carrying on agitations in India and England, another associate of Raja Rammohun Roy was delivering lectures in Calcutta on the rights and duties of citizenship. This associate was not a Hindu College student, but a Pandit of the old school. He was Pandit Ramchandra Vidyabagish, who kept alive the Brahma Samaj from 1830 to 1843. Prasannacoomar engaged him to deliver a course of lectures on 'Niti Darshan' or ethical principles to the students of the Hindu College.² Out of a

¹ The first annual Report of the British Indian Association, signed by Debendranath Tagore as Secretary, states that the total receipt of the Association between the 29th of October, 1851 and 30th Nov., 1852, was Rs. 18,601. Out of this sum, Rs. 10,974 11 as. and 4 pies was spent on the 'Agent in London and his establishment.' Again, the report of the Monthly General Meeting of the Association, held on the 3rd June, 1853, states that "the Committee have forwarded £250 to the "India Reform Society." The Report presented on the 27th January, 1855, states that Rs. 7,186 14 as. 2 p. was sent to London during the year 1854.

² Sj. Satishchandra Chakravarty's edition of the Autobiography of Debendranath, Appendix XV, p. 343. Sj. Chakravarty mentions that the lectures of Vidyabagish were published under the title 'Nitidarshan.' I have not yet been able to trace that book. Sj. Chakravarty informs me that he too has never seen the book.

course of 24 lectures, the following were devoted to Political Philosophy :—No. 10. Patriotism ; No. 19. Peace and War ; No. 20. On the origin and the necessity of Government and the principal forms thereof now prevalent in the world ; No. 21. On the necessity of obedience to the lawful authority and the liberty of the subject ; No. 22. On the origin and the institution of Law ; No. 23. On International Law.¹

On January 9, 1842, Dwarkanath Tagore sailed for England. One of the objects of his visit to England was to come in personal touch with the friends of India in England, and to bring to India an eminent English orator to educate the Bengali youths in constitutional agitation. Dwarkanath selected George Thompson for the purpose. In a farewell meeting in England George Thompson spoke highly of Dwarkanath and expressed gratitude to him for showing “personal kindness and regard to my family interest.” He also frankly admitted that his intended journey to India was not of his own seeking, and explained his statement by making the following observation :—“The distinguished individual (Dwarkanath Tagore), who had lately received the freedom of your city, was

¹ The *Bengal Harukaru*, February 6, 1841. The course of lectures began on the 2nd February, 1841.

commissioned, before he quitted the city of his birth to communicate with me on certain great measures respecting the impartial administration of the law in India, and to enter into certain arrangements with me, provided he should be of opinion that I was an individual likely to advance the great ends, which individually and collectively they had the deepest interest in.”¹

George Thompson was a prominent member of the British India Society in England;² he took a leading part in the abolition of slavery in the West Indies and agitated for the introduction of Free Trade in England.³ He came over to India with Dwarkanath in January, 1843, and roused unparalleled enthusiasm amongst the youngmen of Bengal by delivering a series of lectures at the ‘Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge,’ at K. M. Banerjee’s house, at Chandra-sekhar Deb’s house, at Sree Kissen Singh’s garden house, at the Faujdari Balakhana Hall of Dwarkanath, at the Agri-horticultural Society, at the Mechanics’ Institute and other places.⁴

¹ ‘Scotsman,’ October 26, 1842, quoted in the *Bengal Harukaru*, 20th January, 1843.

² ‘Bengal Spectator,’ 1843, p. 16.

³ ‘Scotsman,’ October 26, 1842, speech of John Wigham in the farewell meeting of George Thompson.

⁴ On the influence of George Thompson’s visit to India see Bholanath Chandra’s article on George Thompson in the ‘Calcutta University Magazine,’ November, 1895. The speeches of George Thompson were published in the

In his speeches he exhorted the educated youngmen, mainly the ex-students of the Hindu College, "to abhor expediency," to stand boldly for the cause of righteousness, and to make organised efforts to secure the protection and security which the constitution of England guarantees. He showed the futility of mere newspaper agitation. "The Press may take up some question affecting your interests, but its statements are gratuitous and unauthorised.....The articles written are the productions of individuals, and, at most represent only the views of a small portion of the community." He asked them to organise themselves into a political association. On the 6th April, 1843, in a meeting held at 31, Fauzdari Balakhana, he proposed the formation of "a British India Society, for bettering the condition of the people and disseminating correct information respecting the Institutions, Law and Government of the country, with a view to the expansion of the just rights, and the protection of the interests of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects on these shores."

On the 20th April, 1843, the 'Bengal British India Society' was formed. G. T. F. Speede proposed and Ramchander Mitter seconded the

Bengal Spectator, February and March, 1843. These were edited by Raj Jogeshur Mitter and published by S. K. Lahiri & Co. in a book in 1895.

first resolution, which ran as follows :—“ That in the deliberate and solemn judgment of this Meeting, the circumstances of the British Indian Empire, and the relations subsisting between the empire and the Government and people of Great Britain, impose upon every individual member of the community, the duty of doing all in his power to ameliorate the condition of the people, and to advance the general prosperity of this country.” The second resolution proposed by M. Crow and seconded by Madhusudan Sen ran thus :—“ That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that in addition to individual effort, it is expedient and necessary that a Society should be formed in Calcutta, upon a basis that shall admit of the friendly co-operation of all persons anxious to promote the good of India, and the improvement, efficiency and stability of the British Government, without respect of caste, creed and place of birth or rank in society.”² The third resolution moved by Tarachand Chakravarty and seconded by Chandrasekhar Deb stated :—“ That a Society be now formed, and denominated the Bengal British India Society, the object of which shall be the collection and dissemination of information, relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, and the laws and institutions, and resources of the country, and to employ such other means of a peaceable and lawful character, as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the

just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow-subjects." The fourth resolution was "that the Society shall adopt and recommend such measures only, as are consistent with pure loyalty to the person and government of the reigning sovereign of the British dominions and the due observance of the Laws and Regulations of this country; and shall discountenance every effort to subvert legal authority, or disturb the peace and well-being of society." It was moved by Ramgopal Ghosh and seconded by Shyamachurn Sen. The fifth resolution, moved by Pearychand Mitra and seconded by Ramgopal Ghosh stated: "that all persons of adult age, and not at the time receiving instruction in any public institution, contributing to the funds of the Society, and conscientiously subscribing to the above fundamental Resolutions, shall be eligible to membership." The sixth resolution proposed the formation of a committee, consisting of Chandrasekhar Deb, Ramgopal Ghosh, Tarachand Chakravarty and Pearychand Mitra, to frame rules, regulations, addresses, etc.¹

¹ 'The Bengal Harukaru,' April 24, 1843. It is noteworthy that the Bengal British India Society vested plenary powers in the hands of a committee of four, two of whom were intimate friends and spiritual disciples of Raja Rammohun Roy. It was Chandrasekhar Deb who suggested the idea of founding the Brahma Samaj to the Raja. Chandrasekhar Deb took a leading part in the

The Bengal British India Society, founded with so much flourish, failed to rouse political consciousness even amongst the limited circle of educated men in Bengal. In the very first year of its birth it showed signs of decadence. In a meeting held on the 7th September, 1843, only 10 members were present.¹

Between 1843 and 1850 there existed two political organisations in Bengal, namely, the Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society. Bholanath Chandra observes that 'one represented the aristocracy of wealth, the other the aristocracy of intelligence.'² But both of these organisations lacked enthusiasm and support from the public. While these were showing signs of becoming moribund institutions, two circumstances again galvanised public opinion in Bengal. The one was the drafting of four bills in 1849 by Mr. Bethune, the then Law Member of the Government of India, with a view to bringing British-born subjects under the jurisdiction of the East India Company's Courts, and the laws administered by

activities of the Bengal British India Society. The 'Bengal Spectator' of the 16th August, 1843, states that he presided over a meeting of the Society held on the 3rd August, and presented a memorial for judicial reform, written by himself.

¹ 'Bengal Spectator,' September 16, 1843.

² 'Life of Digambar Mitra,' Vol. I (2nd edition). p. 66.

them.¹ These bills intended to protect the people

¹ As in discussing the political ideas of Dwarkanath, Ramgopal, Digambar and Sisirkumar we shall have to refer again and again to the 'Black Acts;' we give below a short history of the agitation connected with it. In 1835 Lord Bentinck passed the law by which the jurisdiction of Indian Munsifs, Sadar Amins, and Principal Sadar Amins was extended to civil cases connected with the British-born subjects in India. Dwarkanath joined the European community in denouncing this Act. The Government then made a series of attempts to extend the criminal jurisdiction of Indian Officers and of the Mofussil courts over the British-born subjects. In 1849 Mr. Bethune proposed the following Acts:—

(i) Draft of an Act abolishing exemption from the jurisdiction of the East India Company's criminal courts.

(ii) Draft of an Act declaring the privileges of Her Majesty's European subjects.

(iii) Draft of an Act for the protection of judicial officers.

(iv) Draft of an Act for trial by jury in the Company's courts.

These had to be withdrawn because of the agitation of the European settlers. The next attempt was made in 1856-57. 'The Hindu Patriot' of the 9th April, 1857, informs us that a monster meeting was held in the Town Hall on the Black Acts on the 6th of April, 1857, and George Thompson (who was then paying a second visit to India), Ramgopal Ghosh, Digambar Mitra, Kishorichand Mitra, Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha Bahadur, and Jaykissen Mukherjee pleaded strongly for the abolition of privileges of the British-born subjects; yet it bore no fruit. Then, on the 5th of September, 1861, the Legislature made a compromise by abolishing the privileges but retaining the

of the Mofussil against any molestation by non-official Europeans, who had till then been subject only to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in Calcutta. As it was not possible for the poor villagers to come to Calcutta to prefer charges and conduct the case against the Europeans, the offenders often remained unpunished. The European community in Bengal made a huge agitation against the bills, which they denominated the Black Acts, and sent representations to Parliament against these bills. Ramgopal Ghosh protested against this agitation in his lectures and published a pamphlet, entitled, 'A few Remarks on certain Draft Acts, commonly called Black Acts.' But his protests were of no avail and the bills were withdrawn from the Legislative Council. This gave a rude shock to the educated public in Bengal. They

immunity of trial of the British-born subjects from Indian officers. The Ilbert Bill controversy was the sequel to the agitation over the Black Acts.

Bholanath Chandra makes the following observation on the effect of this agitation. "There can be little room for mutual regard where a few persons are allowed to arrogate superiority, and others have to brook their humiliation in sullen discontent. The standing estrangement has caused a soreness between the two peoples, which has rankled down to the present generation. Worked up by a heritage of passions that has deadened every feeling for fellowship, no rapprochement since made has ever proceeded from the heart of either race."—Life of Digambar Mitra, Vol. I, p. 109.

now thought it an imperative duty to form a powerful political association to protect their interests against the organised attacks of the European community. So long the Bengali public and the European settlers had been working together for the amelioration of the condition of India. In the 'Landholders' Society,' as well as in the 'Bengal British India Society' there were many European members. But in 'the British Indian Association,' which was formed on the 31st October, 1851, there was not a single European member. Another cause for the founding of the British Indian Association was the impending changes in the constitution of India, consequent on the renewal of the Company's Charter. As early as February, 1843, when proposals were being made for establishing the Bengal British India Society, Dakshinaranjan had said :—" Let the existing charter be thoroughly studied and the benefits it guaranteed be claimed by all to whom its provisions applied. All that was now attainable should be sought, and plans matured against the renewal of the Charter." ¹ The British Indian Association was formed by the amalgamation of the Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society. Stalwarts of the former Society like

¹ Dakshinaranjan's speech delivered at a meeting at Sree Kissen Singh's garden house on the 6th February, 1843, reported in the 'Bengal Harukaru,' of the 9th February, 1843.

Raja Radhakanta Deb, Raja Kalikrishna Deb, Raja Satyasharan Ghoshal, Baboos Prasannacoomar Tagore and Jaykrishna Mukhopadhyay as well as the leaders of the latter Society like Ramgopal Ghosh and Pearychand Mitra constituted the first executive committee of the British Indian Association.

The object of the British Indian Association is stated in its first annual Report to be to secure improvements in the local administration of the country and in the system of government, laid down by Parliament. The same Report states that the committee of the Association opened correspondence with prominent men of other provinces and notes with satisfaction "the formation at Poona, Madras and Bombay successively, of Associations of a similar character, which, though they have elected to carry on operations independently of each other, cannot but largely contribute towards the important end of acquainting the British public with the state of feeling in India with regard to its past and future administration." ¹

¹ The first annual report of the British Indian Association, paras. 16 to 18. The second annual report states: "Your committee have kept up a friendly correspondence with the Associations of the sister Presidencies, at intervals, as opportunities occurred." The statements quoted above give the lie to the assertion of Bipinchandra Pal that "neither the British Indian Association of Calcutta which

In order to arrive at a correct estimate of the character of the political activity of the British Indian Association up to 1861, it is necessary to discuss the work done by it. As the old Reports and Minutes of the British Indian Association have become very rare and are to be found, I believe, only in the office of the Association, the summary given below, will, I hope, serve some useful purpose. Moreover, the summary will show how far the members of the Association were influenced by the ideas of Raja Rammohun.

In 1852 the British Indian Association sent a petition to the Government praying for the suppression of dacoities in the Moffussil ; for remodeling the municipal commission, the basis of assessment of houses and the police laws of Calcutta; for allowing sufficient interval between the publication of draft bills and their enactment in order to elicit public opinion; for the definition of the relative duties of the judges and the pleaders and securing the independence of the latter without impairing the authority of the former ; and for the extension of land tenures, which have been beneficial in Bengal, to all the parts of Behar. It sent a petition

is a much older organisation than the Indian Association, nor the Sarbajanik Sabha of Poona, nor even the Bombay Presidency Association, which came into existence later, nor the Mahajan Sabha of Madras, none of these had an all-India outlook.”—Pal’s ‘ Indian Nationalism, Principles and Personalities.’

to Parliament praying for the redress of various grievances and suggesting remedies thereof. Like Rammohun, the Association expressed its robust faith in the sense of justice of the British Parliament. Debendranath Tagore as secretary wrote in this report that "there can be no doubt that, when the real state of things is understood, the British Parliament will not long delay justice to India." So far as the above petitions are concerned, the Association had before it the interest of all classes of people in India. But certain other petitions were made in the interests of the Zamindars alone, in which the Association pray for the exemption of certain section of the people from the liability to appear before judicial court in order to give evidence; and protested against revenue surveys and against resumption of rent-free tenures. The personal influence of the secretary, Maharshi Debendranath, may be seen in the undertaking of investigation by the committee into the condition of education in the interior, and into the effects of the Abkary system on the morals of the lower classes and in the prayer for the substitution of affirmations for oaths.

In the Second Annual Report, presented on the 13th January, 1854, mention is made, among others, of the following petitions: for the lowering of rate of postage for newspapers, especially vernacular newspapers; for changing the procedure of appeals in the Sudder Court; and for

mitigating the hardship of the salt law. The Report states in conclusion :—“ While they (the committee) regret that some of their petitions have apparently not met with the attention of Government, in several instances, they have had due weight and been productive of salutary results.” As regards the Charter Act of 1853 the committee stated that though the Act “will be found defective and disappointing in some matters of the most vital interest to the native community, yet they cannot but acknowledge that there are ample grounds for encouragement in what has been accomplished. The Committee have to record with satisfaction and gratitude that the prayers of your petition to Parliament, have in many instances met either with complete or partial success in the provisions of the new Act for the government of India.” The Committee pointed out the following instances of the success of their petition :—(1) The Committee prayed for limiting the period of the Charter to ten years; Parliament granted the Charter for an indefinite period: their prayers for having a separate Lieutenant Governor for Bengal, for the amalgamation of Sudder Court with the Supreme Court and for the extension of the privilege of education were granted. The Committee petitioned for the separation of the Legislature from the Executive and it was conceded to; but the Committee’s petition for the inclusion of some Indian

members in the Legislature was not attended to. The Report points out that "under provision of Section XXII of the new Act the Governor-General may have it in his power to nominate one or two Native members to the Legislative Council, who may have been in the service of the Company for at least ten years." But the Committee were far from being satisfied with this provision. They pointed out the virtual exclusion of Indians members from the Legislature and observed that "every legitimate means should be adopted to ensure the removal of this great defect from the new enactment, as well as to secure the advantage of having the business of legislation conducted with open doors."

The third Annual Report, presented on the 27th January, 1855, states that the Salt Law and the Sale Law have been modified, access to the Legislative Council has been granted, and privileges regarding suspension and dismissal of the members of Covenanted Service have been extended to those of the Uncovenanted Service, in response to the petitions of the Association. The Association protested against the Bill for remodelling the Mofussil Police on the ground that "by depriving the residents of the means of self-defence and the right of appeal from the decisions of Magistrates, the state of insecurity in the Mofussil would be much greater than that

now obtains.” The Committee had the pleasure of receiving from Dacca a letter bearing about 500 signatures of landholders and others urging the Association to remonstrate against the passing of the Bill. The Report says that the Rangpore Landholders’ Society was affiliated as a branch society of the Association. The Association continued the agitation for the inclusion of Indians into the Legislative Council. The Report observes :—“ To expect that Europeans, who do not mix with the people and cannot, therefore, know their sentiments and feelings on the different questions connected with the framework of native society and the internal administration of the country, should rightly represent them, is utterly vain.” The fifth Annual Report for the year 1856 informs us that “ early in the year, your committee despatched a petition to both the Houses praying for the reconstitution of the Legislative Council on a wider and more liberal basis.” The Association prayed for the holding of the Civil Service Examination in India and for the endowment of chairs for Professors of Sanskrit and Arabic languages. During the year 1856 we notice an attempt on the part of the Association to be truly representative in character. It translated the Cattle Trespass Bill, the Sale Law Amendment Bill and the Law of Prescription Bill into vernaculars and circulated extensively in the Mofussil the copies of these bills for eliciting the opinion of

the country gentry. But very few replies were received by the Committee of the Association. Again, the Committee is reported to "have circulated in the Mofussil a set of questions regarding the influence and effects of the system of indigo-planting upon the condition of Mofussil society." The Committee acknowledged with thanks the co-operation they had received from the Mohammedan Association of Calcutta.

In the Report for the year 1860, presented on the 29th January, 1861, we find that the Association again sent a petition to Parliament for the extension of the basis of the Legislature, for the recognition of the principle of equality of all classes of citizens before the eye of law, and for increasing the amount of Government grant for education. The report dwelt upon the "importance of the promotion of a territorial aristocracy as a political safety-valve for the state."

From the long list of topics discussed by the British Indian Association, it becomes clear that in its early days the Association tried to follow in the footsteps of the great Raja Rammohun Roy. It did not represent the interests of the Zamindars alone, but tried to promote the general well-being of all classes of people. If it failed to cover the country with a net-work of branch societies,¹

¹ This complaint against the Association has been made by Bipinchandra Pal in his 'Indian Nationalism—Principles and Personality,' p. 94.

the failure should be attributed not to the want of zeal in its early members, but to the want of facilities for communication and to the lack of education in the interior of the country. In view of the important work done by the Association during the first ten years of its existence, it is extremely uncharitable to hold that, "Constructive policy they had none, and seldom, if ever, they laid down any programme of systematic action for the political advancement of the country."¹

II. Prasannacoomar Tagore (1801-1868).

Prasannacoomar Tagore was a strong supporter of Raja Rammohun Roy in all kinds of social, educational and political activities. He did not, however, subscribe to the religious opinions of the Raja.² The quotations from the 'Reformer,' which I have been able to collect together, reveal

¹ This view is expressed by A. C. Mazumdar in his "Indian National Evolution," p. 7.

² 'The India Gazette' of October 19, 1831, informs us that Prasannacoomar performed the Durga Puja ceremony. Derozio in his "East Indian" attacked him severely for this. A correspondent in the *India Gazette* supported Prasannacoomar on the ground that he did not perform the Puja out of religious conviction, but out of practical necessity, the ancestral property having been bequeathed to him on condition of performing the Puja. Derozio made enquiries about this condition and wrote that no such condition was attached to the property.

Prasannacoomar as a constructive statesman, who took up Raja Rammohun as his political *Guru*. But Dr. Duff accuses Prasannacoomar of holding radical and extremist views in the early days of the publication of the 'Reformer.' He observes : " In politics, the ' Reformer ' at first assumed a tone of rancorous and indiscriminating violence towards the British Government; out-doing the wildest flights to which ultra-radicalism has ever soared in these lands (Great Britain). A non-descript species of native oligarchy and republicanism combined, was the panacea proposed for remedying all the ills of India. It was thus unskilful and injudicious enough to attempt the erection of towns and palaces out of the surrounding rubbish, by beginning at the top of the intended edifices—forcing a poor, blinded, ignorant, priest-ridden race, to listen to weekly orations on their abstract rights and privileges, as members of a great social polity, before they were capacitated to comprehend one jot or tittle of their individual rights as men." ¹ But as early as July, 1831, we find in Prasannacoomar as much admiration for the British Government in India as was evinced by Rammohun. Prasannacoomar in his article on the ' Political faith of educated Hindoos ' observes : " If we were to be asked, what Government

¹ Quoted in the ' Calcutta Review,' January, 1911, p. 28.

we would prefer, English or any other, we would, one and all reply, English by all means, ay, even in preference to a Hindu Government. But it is a truism, which need not be urged, that no human institution is perfect, and they all admit of improvement. We accordingly take the liberty of pointing out the defects which we perceive in the existing institutions of the country, with a sincere desire for their improvement.”¹ Does this view sound like the thunderings of an ultra-radical? In 1837 the ‘Reformer’ published a long article “On the insecurity of the British Indian Empire,” pointed out in it the haughty conduct of Englishmen towards Indians, and expressed that under Akbar Shah or Hyder Ali such a behaviour on the part of the rulers towards the ruled was unknown. It dwelt upon the exclusion of Indians from responsible posts and observed: “Will these people care whether the English, French or Russians rule over them?”² The statement quoted above does not really mean that

¹ ‘Reformer’ quoted in the *India Gazette* of July 4, 1831.

² ‘The Englishman,’ December 5, 1837. ‘The Englishman’ replied to the charges of the ‘Reformer’ thus: “Let our contemporary read what the French have done and are doing in Algiers at this day, and what the Russians are performing in Poland and choose for himself. He would find the little finger of the autocrat heavier than the whole arm of an Englishman.”

the Bengalee people were anxious to subvert the British Government in India. Prasannacoomar was fully aware of the ignorance and callousness of his countrymen. He only meant to say that the exclusion of Indians from a share, however small, in the Government of the country, would produce discontent among the small group of politically-minded people. He observed in 1833 : “ Not that we mean to insinuate there is any danger of rebellion. The natives are not yet fit for such effectual check to the grasping hand of monopoly—the mass of the people will not even know of the oppression to which they are frequently subjected : they feel the full effects, it is true, of all that is done to prevent their advancement, but they are too ignorant to trace these effects to the proper cause.”¹

Like Raja Rammohun, Prasannacoomar urges the necessity of entrusting responsible posts to Indians. He points out that in the early days of British Indian administration Raja Rajballabh was “ the senior member of the Revenue Board on a salary of rupees 5,000, and had according to the rules of that period a seat in the Council.”²

Like the Raja, again, Prasannacoomar exercised his pen for securing better administration of

¹ ‘Reformer’ quoted in the *India Gazette*, January 29, 1833.

² ‘Reformer’ of the 28th March, 1832, quoted in the ‘*Asiatic Intelligence*’ of October, 1832.

justice in India. The 'Reformer' voiced the grievances of the people of the Mofussil and complained of irregularities in judicial administration in the Mofussil courts.¹ Prasannacoomar thought that the best means of securing impartial and fair justice was to employ Indians as jurors. He showed from the *Mitakshara* that the jury system was not unknown in India. He quoted the following passage from the *Mitakshara*: "Members of a family, those of a profession, the inhabitants of a town, judges appointed by the King, and the King himself, are qualified to decide on all matters of difference, and the authority of one is above that of another, according to the progressive order in which they are arranged." He makes the following observations on the passage: "They (the commentators) say, according to this text, whenever any dispute arose, which concerned only the family affairs of the parties, it was usual to appeal to a competent number of members belonging to that family, and the dispute was referred to them for decision; when the dispute concerned a trade or profession, the respectable members of that trade or profession were called on to decide; and when the dispute was of such a nature as that it could not properly be brought under either of these heads, it was referred to the decision of a

¹ 'Reformer' quoted in the 'India Gazette' of October 4, 1831.

body of respectable inhabitants of the place, which was the scene of that occurrence. The aggrieved party, as well as those who were not satisfied with the decision of these tribunals, had the privilege of appealing to the judges appointed by the King, or to the King himself.”¹ He argues that originally the trade guild and the village Panchayat had the power to decide cases finally, but owing to the growth of despotism, which was helped on by the priestly class, the people lost that right and had to refer to the King for final decision in certain cases. He remarks: “Superstition, which was the prolific source of despotism and the stronghold of priestcraft, contributed not a little to deprive the people of their just rights, by adding undue authority to the privileges of the crown. The ministers of religion, who were also the legislators, easily discovered the weakness of a people, who, from ignorance, were credulous of the most absurd doctrines, which were offered for their belief, and to place their power on a firm basis, they connived with the rulers of the land to increase their power by sacrificing the rights of the people, which were in a manner entrusted to their charge, by the credulous mob.

¹ It is to be noted that nearly a century before the researches of Mr. K. P. Jayaswal, Drs. R. C. Majumdar, Radhakumud Mukherjee and U. N. Ghoshal, who have all attached great importance to the passage quoted above, Prasannacoomar explained its constitutional significance.

Thus the appeal from the verdict of the Panchayat was made to rest with the King.”¹

Prasannacoomar was one of the signatories to the petitions sent to the Supreme Court and to the King in Council praying for the abolition of restrictions on the Press. In the Free Press Dinner, given in honour of Sir Charles Metcalfe on the 9th February, 1838, he explained the necessity of allowing freedom of the Press in the following words: “Some have thought fit to surmise, that by the diffusion of knowledge among the people of India, the connection between her and England will ultimately be dissolved. These people, I say, are quite wrong, because if gratitude be a feeling inherent in human nature, and if education and enlightenment tend to cherish that feeling, how can it be asserted, if India owe to England, her mother country, a heavy debt of gratitude for her enlightenment, that she will prove an ungrateful daughter? No; on the contrary, education, and allowing to the people of India the exercise of the political privileges regarding the English, as at home, is the surest way of establishing British rule on the firmest basis.”²

¹ The ‘Reformer’ quoted in the ‘Asiatic Intelligence,’ December, 1832. Prasannacoomar also wrote articles in January, 1833, supporting Raja Rammohun’s efforts to extend the jury system in India. See ‘India Gazette,’ January 29, 1833.

² ‘Asiatic Intelligence,’ May, 1838.

III. Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1886).

No other Indian held such an eminent position in the public life of Bengal as did Dwarkanath Tagore in the period between 1830 and 1846. Kishorichand Mitra, a junior contemporary of Dwarkanath, has dealt with the eminent services rendered by this illustrious co-adjutor of Raja Rammohun Roy.¹ Dwarkanath was the first Indian to be appointed Honorary Magistrate.² When he visited England, Queen Victoria is said to have desired to confer Knighthood on him but he declined to accept this honour.³ He was invited at the Ninth Anniversary Meeting of the Abolitionary Cymreigyddion Society in Wales, and though he could not be present, an address,

¹ See his 'Memoirs of Dwarkanath Tagore.' Bhola-nath Chandra in his *Life of Digambar Mitra*, Vol. II, p. 178, makes the following observation on Dwarkanath:— "Rammohun Roy's example was the spark that set his latent sentiments on fire—that developed him into a warm-hearted public man."

² The 'Bengal Harukaru,' August 4, 1835, reports that Baboos Dwarkanath Tagore and Radhakanta Deb and Mr. James Kyd were appointed Honorary Magistrates "in pursuance of the determination of Government to give practical effect to the intentions of the Legislature as to the admission of natives and East Indian gentlemen to such offices."

³ 'The Bengal Spectator,' December 1, 1842.

written on a fine piece of vellum in the original Welsh character was presented to him. He was addressed in it as the "Most Illustrious Chieftain Dwarkanath."¹

It was the great object of Dwarkanath's life to rouse the political consciousness of the people of Bengal. In a meeting held on the 18th June, 1836, he said: "The majority of my countrymen say, 'If I have lost one eye, let me take care of the other' and thus they keep themselves back from public meetings, and are tardy in the assertion of their rights." He believed that the spread of English education would cure his countrymen of indifference towards public life. He observed in the same meeting: "Let the Hindu College go on, as it has gone on, for three or four years more, and you will have a meeting like this attended by four times the number of Natives."²

Dwarkanath was fully conscious of the loss of political rights under the British Government. He said in a meeting on the 18th June, 1836, "They have taken all which the Natives possessed; their lives, liberty, property, and all were held at the mercy of Government."³ In spite of the consciousness of this loss, Dwarkanath

¹ 'The Bengal Harukaru,' February 7, 1843.

² Quoted in Bholanath Chandra's *Life of Digambar Mitra*, Vol. I, Foot-note on page 91.

³ Quoted in Kishorichand's *Memoirs of Dwarkanath*.

entertained the greatest admiration for the British Government in India. While in England he declared before the Court of Directors: "I have worked in my humble sphere under a firm conviction that the happiness of India is best secured by her connection with your own great and glorious country, and that the more the people of that vast empire were enlightened, the more sensible they would become of the invincible power of the protecting state, of the excellence of a government, whose pure and benevolent intentions, whose noble solicitude for the welfare and improvement of millions committed by Providence to its charge, may challenge the admiration of the wide world."¹ This admiration for British rule in India proceeded from the belief that education would be promoted, and freedom of opinion conceded by the Government in this country. This was exactly the view of Raja Rammohun, who again and again said that the loss of political rights could be compensated only by the recognition of civil rights by the British Government in India.

Dwarkanath lent his powerful support to Rammohun's scheme of colonization of India by cultured and wealthy citizens of Europe. In a meeting held in favour of colonization at the Town Hall on the 15th December, 1829, Dwarkanath

¹ 'The Friend of India,' March 16, 1843.

argued that colonization would promote agriculture, improve the condition of Ryots and make the Zamindars wealthy and prosperous. From his personal experience he said: "I have found the cultivation of indigo, and residence of Europeans have considerably benefited the country and the community at large."¹

After the death of Raja Rammohun, Dwarkanath made attempts to secure those benefits for the country, for which the Raja had fought so valiantly. In a meeting held on the 8th July, 1835, he advocated the introduction of trial by jury in the Supreme Court and pleaded for extending the jury system to the Mofussil Courts.² Raja Rammohun's efforts to secure freedom of the Press had failed. But Dwarkanath did not relax his attempts to secure it. On the 5th January, 1835, a public meeting was called for the repeal of the Press Regulations and for the removal of restrictions upon public meetings. In it he said: "In rising to second the resolution, I am doing only that which I did ten years ago. When this Regulation was first promulgated, I with three of my relations, and my lamented friend, the late Rammohun Roy, were the only persons who petitioned the Supreme Court against it.....None of them (Bengalees) could I prevail upon to join

¹ 'Asiatic Intelligence,' June, 1830.

² Memoirs of Dwarkanath, p. 51.

me, and I believe, it was thought I should be hanged the next day for my boldness.”¹ When his efforts were crowned with success during the administration of Sir Charles Metcalfe, he wrote : “It (freedom of the Press) strengthens their (Government’s) own hands and ears and eyes, in ruling this vast region, and it is also a guarantee to the people that their rulers mean to govern with justice, since they are not afraid to let their subjects judge of their acts.”²

Dwarkanath exerted himself to the best of his capacity for securing that elementary right of citizens—the protection of life and property. He drew in his Evidence before the Committee of Police Reform a vivid picture of the state of insecurity prevailing in the Mofussil. He said : “I think that, from the Darogah to the lowest peon, the whole of them are a corrupt set of people ; a single case could not be got out of their hands without paying money ; the wealthy always get advantage over the poor. In quarrels between the Zamindars and Indigo Planters large sums are expended to bribe these people. When any report is called for by the Magistrate from the Darogahs, even in a true case, that report could not be obtained without paying a large sum of money ; and should the case be between two

¹ Quoted in Bholanath Chandra’s *Life of Digambar Mitra*, Vol. I.

² *Memoirs of Dwarkanath*, p. 47.

rich parties, the richest, or he who pays the highest would get the report in his favour. If a Jamadar or peon is sent to a village for inquiry, there is immediately a tax levied by them from all the Ryots of the village through the Gomastha of the Zamindar, and this mode of extortion has so long prevailed as almost to give it the character of a just demand ; so much so, that not a single Ryot would ever make an objection to pay it ; indeed they look upon it as an authorized tax. If a dacoity takes place in any neighbourhood, the Darogah and his people will go about the villages and indiscriminately seize the inhabitants, innocent or culpable ; and it often happens that persons so taken, although of the most suspicious character, in the particular transaction, are released on some money inducement being given to the officers.”¹

To remedy this sad state of the Mofussil Police, Dwarkanath suggested the appointment of Deputy Magistrates. In his evidence before the same committee he said : “ To remedy the state of things complained of, Deputy Magistrates should be appointed, either Native, East Indian or European ;² and if selected from the two latter

¹ Report of the Committee formed by Lord Auckland in 1838 to investigate the state of the Bengal Police ; dated 18th August, 1838 (published from the East India House on 26th April, 1853), p. 11.

² Mr. Dampier suggested that a new class of officers

denominations, they should be conversant with the Native language, so as not to be dependent on the interpretations of the other people, but understand directly the Ryots, and when they receive any petition in the vernacular language that they may read it themselves. They should be taken from the respectable class of people, and not selected merely to increase the salary of those who are at present employed, whether Darogahs, Seristadars, or others, amongst whom a good man might perhaps here and there be found, but generally speaking they are good for nothing. The appointment of these new officers should either be made by the Government or the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut. They should be stationed in the interior, and their powers in criminal cases should correspond with those of Moonsiffs, and they should be allowed to exercise jurisdiction over the Thanadars. The present Darogahs should be abolished, and the Thannas remodelled on the plan of those in Calcutta. The Jamadar, or his deputy should personally report as circumstances render necessary, to the Deputy Magistrates and if it comes to his knowledge that a quarrel or dispute is likely to take place, he should immediately give information to the

recruited only from the Indians, and especially from youngmen who had been educated at Hindu College or the Government Schools, should be created. *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

Deputy Magistrate.”¹ Dwarkanath’s suggestion was accepted with certain modifications by the Government in 1843. He thus became instrumental in securing for the educated Indians a class of responsible posts.

Raja Rammohun did not demand the representation of India in the British Parliament. But Dwarkanath suggested that each Presidency should be allowed to send two representatives to Parliament.²

IV. Maharshi Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905).

The biographers of Maharshi Debendranath have not laid adequate stress on the fact that Debendranath as the son of Dwarkanath was sure to occupy a large place in the public and political life of Bengal. The Maharshi himself is partly responsible for this omission; his autobiography being a record of his spiritual development, he has not thought it necessary to relate the part he played in the political history of Bengal between 1843 and 1853. In his autobiography he has remained silent over his activities for several years from May 1851. S. S. Satischandra Chakravarty, the ablest of the editors

¹ *Ibid*, p. 9,

² ‘Friend of India,’ March 16, 1843, Article on “The Old Hindoo *vs.* The Friend of India.”

Bose, Jnanendramohan Tagore, Pearychand Mitra, and Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay became members of the Bethune Society.¹ It is to be noted in this connection that the Society arranged for lectures and discussions on subjects connected with political Science, though it did not agitate for political reforms. Under its auspices Mahendralal Shome delivered a lecture on "The comparative merits of the Laws of Primogeniture and equal succession considered with reference to the principles of natural justice and political economy and their influence on the morals of a nation;" Mr. Kirkpatrick on "Trial by jury;" Charles Piffered on "Theory of Punishment," and Joseph Goodeve on "Laws of England" and Rev. J. Long chalked out a big programme for Sociological investigations in Bengal. Rajnarayan Bose in his autobiography mentions that Debendranath was averse to meeting Europeans. Had that been the case, he would not have taken a leading part in the foundation of the Bethune Society.

I have not been able to find as yet the exact date of the resignation of Debendranath from the secretaryship of the British Indian Association. He not only filled this office with great ability during the first year, but was also elected Secretary for the year 1853. But the annual report

¹ The Proceedings of the Bethune Society, 1859-60, Introduction.

of 1853, presented on the 13th January, 1854, was signed by Iswarchandra Singh as Secretary. Bholanath Chandra collected with the help of Raj Jogeshur Mitter and the members of the family of Digambar Mitra all the papers written by the latter. Bholanath Chandra does not claim the authorship of the reports of the first year of the British Indian Association for Digambar Mitra, who was the Assistant Secretary of the Association, while Debendranath was the Secretary. So we may assert that those reports, if not actually written by Debendranath, were the fruits of his own labour. From these we gather a few of the political ideas of the Maharshi.

The son of Dwarkanath took up his father's plea for affording protection to the poor villagers through the instrumentality of the Government. Debendranath reminded the Government of its primary duty of affording protection to the citizens in the following words :—

“ The rural population, whose industry most largely contributes to the resources of the State, were left not only without adequate protection, but without many of the advantages which are enjoyed by other classes. The means devised in the draft of an Act for affording protection to them, contemplated a control over the watchmen employed by villagers at their own expense, but involved no outlay from the public resources. But as it happened that a considerable portion of

the revenue was raised with avowed object of providing a sufficient Police force for the country the committee were bound to bring to the notice of the Government the wrong which would be done, were the proposed measure to be carried into effect, and the obligation which had long been incurred but not fulfilled, of providing a sufficient force for the protection of the people.”¹

Debendranath also felt keenly the injustice of the Salt tax. The Committee of the Association, indeed, protested only against the heavy fine which was imposed on the Zamindars for any infraction of the monopoly of salt within their Zamindary. But in penning the memorial to the Government Debendranath sounded a note of sympathy for the poor people in the following words :—“ Half a dozen persons may be joint-proprietors of a small *talook*, or of a parcel of rent-free land, having a dozen or half a dozen Ryots, hardly yielding a gross profit of 100 rupees a year, or being of a value exceeding 500 rupees, and each of them may be fined in the aggregate market-value of his property, if any of the Ryots be too poor to pay in any week for his daily salt, and, in order to avoid the difficulty be foolish enough to boil a little of the saline earth, or dig a few holes near the sea shore and steep straw therein

¹ First Annual Report of the British Indian Association, para. 3.

to burn for its ashes, or collect together a heap of earth.'''¹

In order to appreciate correctly the importance of the political activities of Maharshi Debendranath, it should be remembered that the years between 1851 and 1853 was the most important period in the annals of the British Indian Association. It was during these years that a cleavage arose between the European settlers in Bengal and the Bengali community, that agitation was made for representation of Indians in the Legislative Council, that the opening of civil and medical services to Indians was demanded, and a large subsidy was given to the 'Indian Reform Society' and to the so-called agent of the Association in London to carry on propaganda on behalf of India in England. The few facts gleaned above regarding Maharshi Debendranath are not important indeed in the history of political thought of Bengal, but they give, I believe, a more correct interpretation of the life of one of the creators of modern Bengal, who in his early years had the good fortune of coming in contact with Raja Rammohun, the greatest of the social, political and religious reformers of the age.

¹ Petition regarding Laws enacted to prevent infractions of the monopoly of Salt, 1853. Signed by Debendranath Tagore, Secretary.

*V. Ramgopal Ghosh**(1815-1868).*

Ramgopal Ghosh was one of the most prominent leaders of Bengal in the period between 1835 and 1868. Like Dwarkanath, he, too, was busily engaged in commercial affairs and had very little time to devote to political speculations. In practical politics he tried to carry out the reforms suggested by Raja Rammohun Roy. Like the Raja, he too smarted under a sense of the disabilities imposed on able Indians by the foreign Government, but that feeling did not blind him to the obvious benefits of the British rule in India. In the inaugural meeting of the British India Society in 1843, he said that the Mohammedans had been more liberal in the distribution of higher offices than the British. But at the same time he declared that, 'he desired nothing more sincerely than the perpetuity of the British sway in this country.' He further said that, 'while he was a friend to every wholesome reformation, he was the ardent and attached friend of British Supremacy, and should bitterly deprecate any event, which should weaken the ties, which bound India to the people and Government of Great Britain.'¹ Again, in the Harish Memorial Meeting, held in 1861, he said :—"In a country like this, and under a government such as they

¹ The 'Bengal Harukaru,' April 24, 1843.

had, it was impossible to expect native talent and native genius to be appreciated and promoted. They were not living in a free country, or under a representative government. He did not find fault with the existing rule ; perhaps it was the best they could have under present circumstances ; but with an exclusive civil service and no outlet for career there was no stimulus to exertion.”¹ This is simply an echo of Raja Rammohun’s opinion.

He tried his utmost to secure the admission of Indians to the Civil Service. In a large meeting of Indians, held on the 29th July, 1853, he urged the necessity of throwing open Civil Service without any reservation to Indians.²

He also believed that in 1853 time had come when there were many able Indians to represent the people of India in the Legislative Council. He made a very moderate demand for the inclusion of some Indians in the Indian Legislature. He said in the meeting, referred to above : “ I do not pretend to say, nor have ever pretended to say, that the natives should have a preponderance of votes in that Council.....And yet the ministerial scheme provides in effect that no native of India shall be a member of the new Legislative Council.”³

In his pamphlet on ‘A few Remarks on certain Draft Acts, commonly called Black Acts,’ he made

¹ Quoted in Digambar Mitra’s Life, Vol. I, p. 1.

² Public Speeches of Ramgopal Ghosh (1871), p. 8.

³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

a strong plea for securing equality of British-born subjects with Indians before the eye of Law. He also advocated the extension of the jury system on the ground that, "such a system would teach them the nature and responsibility of public duties, it would gradually befit them to take a greater share in the administration of justice." But he thought that in jury trial, unanimity of verdict should not be required of jurors. He wrote : "But whatever these suggestions may be, save us from that glaring absurdity of the English jury system, which makes it necessary that twelve men shall always be of one mind in every question submitted to their consideration." ¹

One particular idea of Ramgopal Ghosh is of great interest to the present generation of the Indian public. He was of opinion that students should not take active part in politics. In moving the fifth resolution in the inaugural meeting of the British India Society, he said that there were two reasons for the exclusion of students from membership of the Society. "The first was the necessity which was laid upon them as pupils, to devote all their time to the acquisition of that valuable instruction, which the institutions to which they belonged were intended to impart. It was almost impossible that at one and the same time they could do their duty to the society, and

¹ Public Speeches of Ramgopal Ghosh (1871), p. 48.

their duty as students of the college to which they belonged.'''¹

VI. Pearychand Mitra
(1814-1883).

Pearychand Mitra, one of the most brilliant students of Derozio, was closely associated with his friends, Rasikkrishna Mullick, Ramgopal Ghosh and Tarachand Chakravarty in all public activities. He was a prominent contributor to the 'Gyananneshun' and the 'Bengal Spectator.' He was appointed the Deputy Librarian of the Calcutta Public Library, when it was established in 1835. He remained connected with this Library throughout his life. He was an enthusiastic member of the 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge,' became the first Secretary of the Bengal British India Society, and materially helped the British Indian Association by his encyclopaedic knowledge. He was also closely connected with the Agri-horticultural Society and the Bengal Social Science Association. He wrote excellent biographies of David Hare, Peter Grant and Ramkamal Sen; and contributed articles to the 'Calcutta Review' and the 'Englishman.' He is regarded as one of the creators of the modern Bengali prose style; and his contributions

¹ The 'Bengal Harukaru,' April 24, 1843.

to Bengali literature are hardly less important than those of Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Akshoykumar Dutta and Bankimchandra Chatterjee.

Pearychand combined in himself the two rôles of a political philosopher and a practical reformer. His speculations on the origin and functions of Government are of some importance to the students of political thought. He was familiar with the current theories of the origin of government. He was of opinion that private property gave birth to government. He thus substantiated his argument :—"Whatever diversity of opinion there may be on the origin of Government—whether it was traceable to contract, heavenly ordination, or the natural course of events, there can be no question as to political institutions having been subsequent to the existence of private property. The idea of property, as being the produce of labour, is natural with man. Land unreclaimed from sterility is common property. It is the first tillage and cultivation which constitutes private property. In proportion as agricultural pursuits are thus carried on, the curtailment of the natural liberty and the want of mutual protection are felt; and it is private property, which gives rise to government, and not government to private property."¹ The influence of Locke is quite apparent here. Pearychand made a practical application of this theory by insisting on the

¹ 'Calcutta Review,' 1846, July-Dec., p. 316.

paramount duty of the Government to protect the rights of private property of the Ryots.' He tried to prove from the *Manu Samhita* that land-revenue in ancient India was a tax and not rent, and that the tax was paid as 'the price of protection.' So it was incumbent on the present Government to protect the rights of the Ryots against the oppression of the Zamindars as well as of others. He did not believe in the *laissez-faire* theory of the functions of government. He maintained that the weak and the poor require special protection from the Government. "It should be the duty of the ruling authority to protect equally all classes of its subjects, but the opulent and powerful do not require so much of its constant care and anxiety as the poor and helpless."¹

He maintained that no Government can adequately discharge its legitimate functions without consulting the opinion of the governed. So he advocated the inclusion of Indians in the Legislative Council. On the eve of the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1853, he wrote a pamphlet on behalf of the British Indian Association entitled "Notes on the Evidence on Indian Affairs." In it he analysed the evidence given by Lord Ellenborough,² Sir H.

¹ 'Calcutta Review,' 1846, July-Dec., pp. 306-07.

² Lord Ellenborough's evidence is of peculiar interest to the students of constitutional history of India. Long

Maddock, H. T. Prinsep, Lord Hardinge, Mr. F. J. Halliday, John Stuart Mill and J. C. Marshman before the Committees of the two Houses in 1852 regarding the inclusion of Indians in the Legislative Council. Pearychand observed that Lord Ellenborough and Sir Herbert

before the time of Sir Syed Ahmad, Mahammad Yusuf, H. H. the Aga Khan and Lord Morley, he suggested the creation of two chambers of Legislature in India—one for the Hindus and another for the Mohammedans. He thought it “very desirable and expedient that there should be formed, by the selection of the Government of Calcutta, bodies of Natives, Hindoos and Mussalmans respectively two separate bodies, to which bodies should be communicated, for their consideration and opinion all projects, bearing upon their respective laws, customs and religion. I would not, by any means, give to such bodies the power of negating any law the government thought fit to pass; I think, there should be, not merely that publicity, which is now given to all intended Acts of the Legislature, which invites observation and enables the Natives to state their objections, if they have any, but that they should be enabled to state their objection with that weight which always attaches to a regularly constituted body.”—Commons’ Report, 1852, p. 233. Quoted by Pearychand in the above-mentioned pamphlet.

It is to be noted in this connection that Rammohun Roy secured a pledge from Lord Ellenborough that the Lord would “advocate on all occasions an enlightened policy to his (Rammohun’s) countrymen.”—‘The Reformer’ quoted in the *India Gazette*, January 29, 1833. ‘The Reformer’ quoted the authority of the “Bengal Harukaru” for this information.

Maddock were for a consultative Board of Indians; Halliday, Maddock, J. Sullivan and Sir G. R. Clerk thought that competent Indians could be found for filling up the seats in the Legislative Council. Halliday remarked that the Hindus and the Mussalmans were divided and so the representation of Indians would be difficult. Pearychand was the first public man in India to combat the idea of separate representation of different communities. He wrote :—"This remark (of Halliday) as to divisions applies to the social and religious state of the country, and the matters on which differences exist have little connection with legislation, and do not require separate representation (*e.g.*, widow marriage, child marriage, inter-dining, Shradh, recital of Veda for Idolatry—these questions are not intended for Legislature).¹ That body want generally information on subjects connected with the internal administration of the country, on which the people think and feel substantially in the same manner; and even supposing that the community is divided in opinion on subjects coming within the cognizance of the Legislature, who but a Native can be competent to report the sentiments of the people at large?"

¹ This statement shows that Pearychand was not prepared to invite legislative interference in social matters. His brother, Kishorichand, however, held the contrary view.

He also showed that in the Ceylonese Legislature there were 9 official and 6 non-official members and one of the latter was a Ceylonese. He cited the example of Jamaica, where "persons of colour are admitted to all the privileges of white persons and about a dozen 'coloured men' sit in the house of Assembly." (Quoted by Pearychand from Bigelow's 'Jamaica in 1850.') He, therefore, argued that "when Ceylonese and Negroes are entrusted with legislation, not only justice, but a regard to the interests of this country requires that the Natives should also be employed in similar situations."¹

Pearychand was a strong advocate of Indianization of services. He held that principles of equity, economy and the good of India can be promoted only by opening all offices to qualified Indians. He wrote in 1846 :—"If the interests of the country are to be served, the line of demarcation which now exists between the covenanted and the uncovenanted must be broken down, as properly qualified candidates increase in number."² He reiterated his view in the above-mentioned pamphlet in 1853.

He was one of the champions of the cause of the Ryots. I believe that the numerous articles on

¹ Pearychand's "Notes on the Evidence on Indian Affairs." Conclusion.

² 'Calcutta Review,' 1846, July-Dec., p. 339.

the miseries of the peasants in the 'Bengal Spectator' were written by Pearychand. I have come to this conclusion from the comparison of style and the views expressed by him in his article on "The Zamindar and the Ryot" in the sixth volume of the 'Calcutta Review' with the articles referred to above in the 'Bengal Spectator.' He ascribed the misery of the Ryots to "the radically wrong basis of the permanent settlement—the grinding consequences of the sub-letting system, and uncertainty of the tenure arising from the unadjustment of the *nerik*—the pernicious effect of the Mahajani system—the imposition of the Zamindari and *Naibi* abwabs—the oppression of the Zamindar or his agent—the too general inefficiency and apathy of the administrative authorities—the veniality of the ministerial officers—the defectiveness of the adjective law—the bad influence of taxes upon legal proceedings—the abuses of the *Huftam* and *Panjam* Regulations, and the tyranny of many Indigo Planters." ¹ He emphasised the importance of protecting the Ryots from these multifarious oppressions by stating his conviction that "in proportion as the rights of its cultivating classes are protected, their grievances redressed and condition elevated, the agricultural and commercial state of the country will be improved,

¹ 'Calcutta Review,' 1846. July-Dec., p. 342; compare this view with those of Akshoykumar Dutta and Bankimchandra Chatterjee, both of whom seem to have been indebted to Pearychand.

the progress of crime checked, intelligence promoted and happiness diffused.’’

He suggested two means for affording protection of law to the poor Ryots. One was the abolition of the stamp-duty on judicial proceedings. He quoted the opinion of Jeremy Bentham to show how law-taxes were detrimental to the dispensation of justice. Another means suggested by him was the revival of the village Panchayat. “This is a useful institution and the people should be encouraged to refer all petty complaints for arbitration to that tribunal.”¹

He believed like Akshoykumar that the spread of education would do much to mitigate the sufferings of the Ryots. So he appealed to the Government to spread vernacular education and to teach agriculture in all schools and colleges.² In a meeting of the Bengal Social Science Association held on the 22nd January, 1869, he expressed his belief that “there was an intimate connection between crime and the spread of education. The condition was not so obvious in England, because there was no universal system of popular education, but it might be seen in operation on the continent. He believed that if popular education were properly promoted, crime would decrease.”³

¹ ‘Calcutta Review,’ 1846, July-Dec., pp. 340 & 347.

² *Ibid*, p. 349.

³ Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, 1869, p. 49.

VII. *Kishorichand Mitra*

(1822-1873).

The life and activities of Kishorichand Mitra, the gifted brother of Pearychand Mitra, have been ably described by Sj. Manmathanath Ghosh in his biography of Kishorichand and by Sir Devaprasad Sarvadhikary in a recent article in the 'Calcutta Review.' We note down below a few of the political ideas of Kishorichand.

The political faith of Kishorichand and its affinity to the ideas of Raja Rammohun may be best illustrated from the 'Introductory Discourse,' read at the Hindu Theophilanthropic Society in 1843. He said :—" I would be the first person to reprobate the narrow and short-sighted policy of our Merchant Princes—our joint-stock sovereigns—to advocate the abolition of their salt and opium as well as their administrative monopoly, in order that the Natives may participate in the benefits of an unfettered commerce, and enjoy those situations of emolument and responsibility to which they are entitled. I am firmly persuaded that one of the best means for regenerating and elevating India is to do her political justice—to free her from the political disabilities under which she labours—to render the path of political distinction accessible to her children—to realise the benevolent intentions of the last Charter as embodied in the 87th clause—to give them a share in

the administration of their country, by levelling that distinction of covenanted and uncovenanted service which a blind self-interest has upreared—by annihilating the ‘aristocracy of skin’ and recognising merit and not complexion as worthy of reward. But political elevation alone, exclusive of intellectual and what is more, of moral and religious elevation cannot realise the hopes of the friends of India.”¹

As he advocated the recognition of the principle of equality of status in Government service, so did he hold equality before the eye of law to be a cardinal principle of constitutional form of Government. In his “Memoirs of Dwarkanath,” he went out of his way to condemn the efforts of Dwarkanath to maintain the judicial privileges of the British-born subjects. He observed:—“The exemption of British-born subjects from the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts in the Mofussil is unconstitutional in itself, unjust in principle, and often oppressive in practice.”

He held it as an essential function of Government to provide education to the people. On the 24th July, 1867, he said before the Bengal Social Science Association that “education of the proper type would effect such a regeneration in my countrymen as will make them, under the guidance of an enlightened government, willing and able

¹ Calcutta Review, Vol. II, October-December, 1844, p. 270.

instruments to work out their prosperity and happiness.”¹ Unlike his brother, Pearychand, he was in favour of legislative interference in purely social matters, which demanded reform. He formed “The Association of Friends for the Promotion of Social Improvement,” which used to meet at his own house. The Association “sent up to the Legislative Council the first petition against polygamy and it has followed up the efforts of others with another representation on the same subject. It proposed a new Marriage Act as applicable to the marriage of all classes of the population.”²

Like his brother, Kishorichand, too, attached great importance to the elevation of the condition of the Ryots. He is the first Indian, I believe, to apply Buckle’s theory to interpret the history of the degradation and enslavement of the peasants of India. Bankimchandra in his essays on the ‘Peasants of Bengal’ further developed this theory. In a meeting of the Bethune Society, held on the 14th January, 1864, he read a paper

¹ Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, 1867.

² The Hindu Patriot, April 23, 1857, p. 133. The information given above is of great importance in the social history of Bengal. It shows that Pandit Iswar-chandra Vidyasagar was not the first man to petition for the abolition of polygamy ; nor was Keshabchandra Sen the first to move the Government for enacting a marriage law.

on "Agriculture," and in it he showed by 'appropriate quotations from Buckle and Mill, that it was the most vulgar of all errors to attribute the diversities of conduct and character in nations to inherent natural differences.' ¹

VIII. *Govindachandra Dutta.*

Govindachandra Dutta, son of Rasamay Dutta, and father of the gifted poetesses Taru and Aru Dutta, was a brilliant student of the Hindu College. He got a senior scholarship in 1841 and was appointed a Deputy Magistrate. Subsequently, he was promoted to the Finance Department. He was converted into Christianity, but in political ideas and aspirations he was at one with the other disciples of Rammohun Roy. He wrote a series of articles on literature, philosophy and British Indian administration in the "Calcutta Review." Of these articles, one on "Administration of Criminal Justice in Bengal," published in 1846, is specially important for our purpose. This article reveals the writer's thorough knowledge of the theory and working of the constitutions of contemporary France and England and shows his eagerness to secure the benefits of constitutional government in India.

The criterion which he sets up for judging the merit of a particular form of government is the

¹ Proceedings of the Bethune Society, 1864.

degree of protection afforded to the citizens. His distrust of village self-government is as lively as that of Raja Rammohun Roy. He thinks that the direct management of executive details by village communities has always, even under the most favourable circumstances, failed of success. "In such a country as India, it is morally certain to fail."¹ He characterises the government, which prevailed in Bengal before the time of Lord Cornwallis, as feudal in form. He is of opinion that the feudal government of Zamindars was not, on the whole, a series of unmitigated evils, wanton oppressions and chaotic disorders. "Tyrannical and cruel themselves, the nobility of the country ruled absolute over their own dominions—seldom permitting strangers to interfere in matters connected with their tenantry, whom they considered their own exclusive property, and putting down all crimes, except those which they themselves committed, with a rod of iron."² As regards the British Government, he complains that up to the time of Lord Amherst, the Government, which was powerful enough to fight against the Mahrattas, Chait Sing, Nepal and Burma, "surveyed for a time with an apparent [indifference for which it is not easy to find any reasonable excuse, these enormities perpetrated under

¹ 'Calcutta Review,' Vol. VI, p. 163.

² *Ibid*, p. 135.

its eyes, upon those who looked up to it, with undeniable rightfulness for assistance and protection." Even at the time when he was writing this article (1846), the villagers were being molested by large bands of dacoits. He suggests various reforms in the administration of the country, with a view to bringing in the reign of law in India. Of these suggestions we shall take up for discussion only a few.

It is generally believed by writers like Pandit Shivanath Shastri, S. Manmathanath Ghosh and S. Satishchandra Chakravarty that Ramgopal Ghosh was the first and the only Indian to raise his voice against the judicial privileges of the British-born subjects before 1851. But in the year 1846 Govindachandra wrote :—"The necessity of dealing with all alike, of breaking down the invidious distinction of having one description of tribunal for the governors, and another for the governed, is too evident to be questioned. The injustice to the natives of exempting a class of wealthy persons, 'who now enjoy a right of free resort to the interior,' from the jurisdiction of the local authorities, which are always open to them against the people, appears to us to be an evil too glaring to be of long continuance. The sooner, therefore, the present system is done away with, the better."

Contemporaneously with Pearychand Mitra, Govindachandra pleaded for equalization of pay

and prospects of the uncovenanted service with the covenanted. He complains that the highest salary which a Deputy Magistrate could draw being Rs. 350, it is a miserable recompense for the high qualifications possessed by Indian Deputy Magistrates. He thinks that a responsible post must carry such a salary as would make the incumbent free from corruption.

Next to Rammohun Roy, Govindachandra was the most powerful advocate of the theory of separation of powers in the first half of the nineteenth century. He condemns the concentration of judicial and executive power—the functions of thief-catcher and thief-trier—in the hands of the Magistrates as injurious to offenders, to the community and to the Magistrates themselves. The offenders cannot get unbiassed judgment, the community awaiting judicial trials suffers from the pre-occupation of the Magistrate with executive affairs, and the Magistrates suffer in dignity from their odious occupation as constables. He asserts that “there is scarcely any principle in jurisprudence more important than the separation of these two offices.”¹

To Govindachandra, the liberty of person is such a sacred thing that he would not allow the magistrate to imprison even a man of bad character on mere suspicion. He writes :—“In France

¹ ‘Calcutta Review,’ Vol. VI, p. 149.

or England, the idea of imprisoning a freed convict, merely because he was a bad character, and without satisfactory proofs of any overt offence, committed by him, would be scouted as preposterous. In no country is it recognised as a principle of government. On the contrary, it is an arbitrary violation of personal liberty which should, except under peculiar circumstances, be held sacred." He went so far as to suggest that even if this arbitrary power of the magistrate be found to have actually repressed crime, it should be given up. He remarks sarcastically:—"If the most effectual mode of repressing crime be that of hanging all the bad characters, it seems about as reasonable to hang people, as to imprison them, without proof of specific crime."¹

The ideas referred to above illustrate clearly the influence of the Western political ideas on the minds of Indian youths in the first half of the last century.

IX. Girishchandra Ghosh

(1829-1869).

The writings of Girishchandra Ghosh, the founder and first editor of the "Hindu Patriot" and "The Bengalee" have been collected and published in a handy volume by his grandson Sj.

¹ 'Calcutta Review,' Vol. VI, p. 176.

Manmathanath Ghosh, who has also compiled and edited a biography of his grandfather. Having left school at the age of sixteen, Girishchandra first entered the Financial Department as a junior clerk, and in 1850 joined the Military Pay Examiner's Office, where he eventually rose to become the Registrar.

Girishchandra's political views are extremely conservative in character. Like Raja Rammohun, he entertained a very high opinion of the beneficial character of the British Government in India. He held that the educated Indians had not yet become fit for taking the responsibility of their country's administration on their own shoulders. "By subverting the British rule, even if it were in their power to do so--they would only prepare their necks for another and perhaps, a heavier foreign yoke."¹ He would not advise the people, or the Government to undertake any reform without weighty considerations. Commenting on the Civil Service Bill, he wrote:—"We have a distrust for all changes except such as are called for by the imperative necessities of altered times. Undoubtedly, the Indian Government requires to be reconstructed. But the process should be one of great judgment and extreme caution."² It would

¹ Selections from the Writings of Girishchandra Ghosh (1912), p. 117.

² *Ibid*, p. 377.

be wrong, however, to think that he was a believer in Eldonian Toryism. His political principles were akin to those held by Sir Robert Peel after the issue of the Tamworth Manifesto. In 1858 he wrote in the 'Calcutta Monthly Review':—"The excellence of all political institutions will be found, on ultimate analysis, to consist in the judicious and skilful combination of the elements of stability and progress. When the two are not in equivalent proportions, society is not in a state of radical union; there is no internal cohesion of its parts. Mechanical pressure from without may for a time hold them together, but ever and anon the discordant elements seek for an outlet and a vent, and the violence with which the compound breaks and bursts at last is proportioned always to the intensity and tightness of the compressing force." ¹

As progressive measures he advocated, like Rammohun, the spread of education and along with it the employment of educated Indians to posts of trust and responsibility. ²

Girishchandra was not much of a democrat. He thought that as India had been governed in the past by a king, served and supported by a number of nobles, Indians were familiar with that form of government alone. In 1863 he wrote an article

¹ *Ibid*, p. 113.

² *Ibid*, pp. 115-18.

in 'The Bengalee' supporting direct recruitment to the Civil Service. In it he remarked:—"The natives of India understand fully their position under a class of recognised aristocrats. They have merely transferred their reverence from the Omrah of the Mogul Court to the Omrah of the British administration. Essentially dynastic in their sympathies, they can ill appreciate a sovereign without a hereditary body of nobles to serve her." ¹

His hostility to democracy led him so far as to oppose trial by jury, for securing which all the leaders of this period had made so much effort. Girishchandra wrote:—"Trial by jury, to whom the English law allows functions more important, difficult and responsible than are allowed to the judge, is looked upon by all philosophical jurists as one of the relics of mediaeval barbarism, and the strong and unreasoning conservatism of Englishmen in general has yet preserved it as a positive institution after it has been speculatively discarded by the greatest thinkers." ²

X. *Harishchandra Mukherjee*

(1824-1861).

Like Girishchandra, Harishchandra was a self-made man, without the advantage of high

¹ *Ibid*, p. 450.

² *Ibid*, p. 369.

connection and collegiate education.¹ He had to give up his studies in the Union School at the age of 14 or 15. He began his career as a clerk on rupees twenty-five a month in the Military Auditor General's office and rose to a responsible post in that department by virtue of his sterling qualities. His talent as a journalist was first appreciated by the readers of the 'Hindu Intelligencer,' to which he used to contribute articles. In 1852 he became a member of the British Indian Association, and soon acquired an influential position in it. He founded a branch of the Brahma Samaj at Bhowanipur and began to preach religious reform in it. He took over the charge of the 'Hindu Patriot' from Girishchandra in 1856. His political ideas are to be gleaned from the editorial articles of the 'Hindu Patriot.'

Harishchandra was fully conscious of the benefits conferred by the rule of the East India Company on India. In 1858 he wrote: "The Company has carried order where it was chaos, imposed laws on lawless herds of banditti, given security to possession and property, where it was perpetual danger and disturbance, scattered the luxuries of European civilisation, diffused the blessings of Anglo-Saxon energy and industry,

¹ Sambhoocharan Mukherjee projected a biography of Harishchandra. The portion he wrote has been published in the 'Bengal, Past and Present,' 1914, April-June, pp. 284-89.

founded an admirable system of political equality, and brought justice to the poor man's door.''¹ But these benefits did not blind him to the defects of the Government. The defects, which according to him needed reform, were pointed out by him in the following words: "We ask, for instance, that the dualism of a really controlling and a nominally directing authority over the acts of the local governments may be done away with."² We ask that the local legislature may contain within its body a non-official element, one that may control in some measure the not always well-guided action of official legislators. We want an improvement of the judicial system, leaving it to the wisdom of government and of Parliament to decide the particular mode in which the improvement is to be effected. We want that the acknowledged right of the native Indian subjects of the Crown to participate in the government of their own country be no longer allowed to be set at naught by the executive. We want that the immense capabilities of British India may be

¹ 'The Hindu Patriot,' January 14, 1858.

² It is difficult to say from the passage quoted above whether he demanded the abolition of political power of the Company. In the articles published on the 14th January and the 25th February, 1858, he vigorously protested against the abolition of the Company's power. Thus he proved himself a disciple of Rammohun.

opened to legitimate enterprise by the removal of fiscal imposts of a prejudicial character.”¹

He maintained that there had been an equilibrium of forces in the government of the country up to a very recent time. The Civil Service, the Supreme Court, and the Zamindars formed, as it were, the three estates of the realm. “They balanced each other, checked and counterchecked each other, and under the shade of a constitution founded on British principles but adapted to Asiatic circumstances, and framed with such special reference to the exigencies of future progress, the country advanced rapidly in wealth, prosperity and civilisation.”² But in recent times a new force, the educated middle class, had come into existence and destroyed the equilibrium of the constitution. They should be admitted freely into the Civil Service and a share of political power should be entrusted to them. In an article on the ‘Amalgamation of Supreme and Sudder Courts,’ he further argued that the bulk of property is in the hands of Indians; and “it is not in the nature of things, that property can long be dissociated from political power.”³ While the British Parliament was busily engaged in making arrangements for the transfer of India from the Company to the Crown, Harishchandra raised the

¹ ‘The Hindu Patriot,’ February 12, 1857.

² *Ibid.*, ‘The Civil Service and the Natives.’

³ *Ibid.*, January 28, 1857.

first cry for the recognition of the right of self-determination. He wrote: "Can a revolution in the Indian Government be authorised by Parliament without consulting the wishes of the vast millions of men for whose benefit it is proposed to be made? The reply must be in the negativeThe time is nearly come when all Indian questions must be solved by Indians. The mutinies have made patent to the English public what must be the effects of politics in which the Native is allowed no voice."¹

Harishchandra was opposed to two of the political ideas of Raja Rammohun. The Raja had pleaded for the codification of Civil and Criminal laws, but Harish opposed the codification of the Penal laws on the ground that "codification can only succeed under a despotism, and codified law is always inimical to public liberty."² Another idea of the Raja to which Harish was opposed, was the colonization of India by British settlers.³

As an important member of the British Indian Association, Harishchandra lavished high praises on the permanent settlement which he regarded "as the most powerful bond which will unite Hindoostan to Britain." He ascribed the failure

¹ 'The Hindu Patriot,' January 14, 1858.

² *Ibid*, January 29, 1857. "On the Penal Code." He again opposed the codification in an article on 'Judicial Legislation,' published on March 5, 1857.

³ *Ibid*, May 6, 1858.

of the Sepoy Mutiny in Bengal to the permanent settlement.¹ He believed education to be the most effective preventive against the outbreak of rebellion. But the Government, in his opinion, should direct its efforts to the imparting of the highest order of knowledge to those alone who belong to the upper classes in society. These highly educated upper classes would diffuse knowledge among all other classes in the society.²

Though Harishchandra thus identified himself with the upper classes, he was ever watchful of the interests of the masses. His selfless and arduous efforts on behalf of the poor peasants during the Indigo agitation have justly acquired for him the title of “the friend of the Ryots.”

¹ ‘The Hindu Patriot,’ April 22, 1858.

² *Ibid*, April 1, 1858.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIBERAL SCHOOL OF POLITICAL THOUGHT (1861-1884).

I. Introduction.

In the preceding chapters we have tried to show how Raja Rammohun, the Hindu College students and the political disciples of the Raja prepared the ground for the rise of the Democratic and Nationalist movement in Bengal. The movement started by the Raja received a great impetus from the simultaneous operation of five correlated forces. These were wider diffusion of English education, researches of the Orientalists into the past history of India, reaction against Western civilisation in favour of Hinduism, rapid improvement in the means of communication, and political movements in Western countries.

Of these five forces the most important was the spread of English education. As early as 1838, Sir Charles Trevelyan observed that amongst those who had received 'English education' "the most sanguine dimly look forward in the distant future to the establishment of a national representative assembly as the consummation of their hopes—all of them being fully sensible that these plans of improvement could only be worked

out with the aid and protection of the British Government by the gradual improvement of their countrymen in knowledge and morality.”¹ The Calcutta University being established in 1857 began to turn out a large number of men with collegiate education. Between 1857 and 1871 1,495 students passed the F.A. Examination, 548 the B.A. Examination, and 112 the M.A. Examination. Between 1872 and 1882, 2,666 students passed the F.A. Examination, 1,037 the B.A. Examination and 284 the M.A. Examination from the Calcutta University.² The effect of this diffusion of collegiate education is noted by Sir Richard Temple in the following words: “The educated Natives are also moved by aspirations for self-government, for political power, and even for representative institutions, the concession of which does not at present fall within the range of practical politics. Such ideas have been mooted in former times, but have never been so fully defined, nor so openly declared, as they are at present.” In another place he observes: “There is danger of discontent being engendered in the minds of educated Natives, if adequate and suitable employment does not offer itself to them in various directions. As all the arts and sciences which

¹ Sir Charles Trevelyan's “On the Education of the People of India.”

² These figures have been taken from the Report of the Indian Education Commission of 1882, p. 269.

have helped to make England what she is, are offered for, even pressed on the acceptance of, the Natives, it must be expected that those who do accept these advantages will be animated by hopes and stirred by emotions, to which they were previously strangers. They will evince an increasing jealousy of any monopoly of advantage in any respect being maintained in favour of Europeans. They are already raising a cry, louder and louder, the purport of which is 'India for the Indians.'"¹

The number of educated Bengalis increased so much indeed, that it became impossible for the Government to provide employment for them in public departments. Some of the most highly gifted youngmen of Bengal now tried to enter the hitherto closed arena of Indian Civil Service, which was thrown open to competition as a result of the agitation from the time of Rammohun to that of Harishchandra. While men like Satyendranath Tagore, Rameshchandra Dutt and Beharilal Gupta were fortunate enough to enter the Civil Service, others like Manomohan Ghosh and Lalmohan Ghosh failed, owing probably to some defects in the regulations for the examination, to get the much-coveted post. Surendranath Banerjea succeeded in entering the Civil Service indeed, but was compelled to resign owing to some technical

¹ Sir Richard Temple's 'India in 1880.'

mistakes attributed to him. These three disappointed candidates for the Civil Service, who had received the highest kind of Western education and had imbibed the Liberal and National spirit of the West from their sojourn in England, immensely strengthened the movement for Nationalism and Democracy in India.¹ With them were associated two others of the first generation of Indian barristers—W. C. Bonnerjee and Anandamohan Bose. The rank and file of the discontented middle class who supported these movements received their education in the schools and colleges of Bengal and could not find any employment, high or low. Even those who by reason of their worth and merit could get employment smarted under a sense of inferiority and subordination to the European members of their respective departments. We have referred to the existence of this feeling among the ex-students of the Hindu College in the second chapter. It is not unlikely that Bankimchandra, the greatest exponent of Nationalism in India, took to the preaching of this theory after he had met with disappointment in service. Bankimchandra is certainly the best specimen of Indian intellect and if a man like him is condemned to serve under those British members who are very much junior to him in service

¹ It is noteworthy that during the Swadeshi agitation Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, another disappointed candidate for the Civil Service, became its leader.

or inferior to him in quality, discontent is sure to arise in the heart of the person so superseded. Early in 1881 Bankim had a quarrel with Mr. Buckland, the District Magistrate of Howrah; in the middle of that year he was appointed Officiating Assistant Secretary to the Finance Department. On the 22nd January, 1882, he was transferred to the post of Deputy Magistrate; and the post of Assistant Secretary was converted into that of Under Secretary and was made a monopoly of the members of the Indian Civil Service.¹ Bankimchandra published his nationalist novels, 'Ananda Math' and 'Devi Chaudhurani' in December, 1882, and in 1883 respectively and preached nationalism as a religion in his articles on Dharmatattva in the 'Nabajiban' of 1884. From a consideration of the dates mentioned above, it seems to me a likely hypothesis that Bankim's disappointment in Government service played a part in the enunciation of his theory of nationalism. Whatever might be the case with Bankimchandra, it is certain that the thwarted ambition of the educated youths of Bengal led them to look forward to the time when the democratic control over the machinery of government would, they believed, give satisfaction to their desire for political preferment.

¹ See S. J. Sachish Chandra Chatterjee's "Life of Bankimchandra," third edition, and 'A. B. Patrika,' 2nd February, 1882.

But it would be a mistake to attribute the rise of democratic and nationalist ideas solely to the spread of Western education and the consequent disappointment of educated youths. Other causes, far less materialistic than this, were at work in the sixties and seventies of the last century. The foundation of researches into the history, culture and civilisation of ancient India was laid down by Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, Anequetil du Perron and others in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. During the first three decades of the last century, Colebrooke and H. H. Wilson made important contributions to the study of ancient Indian civilisation. Then between 1840 and 1885 Roth published his 'Literature and History of the Vedas,' Max Müller his 'Text of the Rigveda and other books revealing the glories of the ancient Hindus, and Prinsep and Cunningham explored the ancient Indian art, epigraphy and archaeology. Being inspired by the researches of Western scholars, two Bengali antiquarians, Raja Rajendralala Mitra and Dr. Ramdas Sen, made original contributions in the seventies of the last century to our knowledge of ancient India. It is noteworthy that the former was a prominent member of the British Indian Association, and the latter devoted his attention to the writing of articles on ancient Indian jewellery and military weapons showing the splendour, military skill and prowess of the ancient Hindus. The researches

of this devoted band of Western and Bengali scholars imparted a sense of self-confidence to the educated public in Bengal. They were especially overwhelmed with joy when they heard the praise of the achievements of the ancient Hindus from Western scholars like Max Müller.

The third cause which was responsible for the spread of nationalist ideas was a strong reaction against Western religion and civilisation, set in generally by men who had received the highest Western culture. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore might be called the leader and pioneer of this movement. He received his education in the Hindu College, but was averse to the use of English words in writing and conversation and opposed the conversion of Bengali youths into Christianity. The diffusion of knowledge about ancient India as a result of the researches of the Orientalists further strengthened this movement. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay and Rajnarain Bose, classmates in the Hindu College and two of the most brilliant students of that institution, set their face against the wholesale imitation of Western civilisation and preached the beauty and grandeur of Hindu culture. Both of them strongly advocated the use of Bengali language in social intercourse and public functions. Rajnarain Bose in his Autobiography relates how he along with his friends established a club, where members inadvertently using the English language had to pay a fine of

one pice for each English word spoken. Rajnarain Bose delivered a lecture under the auspices of the National Society on 'The Superiority of Hinduism over all other forms of Faith' in 1872. About the same time Raja Kamalkrishna Bahadur and Kalikrishna Bahadur established the Sanatan Dharma Rakshini Sabha or Association for the defence of the Eternal Religion, for helping which Association Swami Dayananda, the greatest leader of the Hindu revival in northern India, visited Calcutta.¹ In 1875 Keshabchandra Sen discovered for young Bengal the magnetic personality of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, who inspired the 'English-educated' people of Bengal with the lofty spiritual ideal of Hinduism. Improvements in the means of communication through railway, steam service, good metalled roads and cheap postage, promoted national feeling in India as much as these did in contemporary Germany and Italy. Facilities of travel in the country induced the propagators of national democratic ideas to go on lecture-tours to Mofussil towns. Manomohan Ghosh and Surendranath Banerjea thus travelled from place to place delivering lectures on these new ideas. Cheap postage helped the

✓¹ Dr. J. N. Farquhar represents the movements inaugurated by Swami Dayananda and Ramkrishna Paramhansa as counter-Reformation. I do not subscribe to this view. See my 'History of the Indian Reformation in the Nineteenth Century.'

circulation of vernacular newspapers, which were replete with these ideas.

Last, though not the least in importance, was the repercussion of Western political movements on the ideas of young Bengal. Between 1861 and 1884, Germany, Italy, Roumania, Servia and Montenegro attained national unification. During the same period the Second and Third Reform Acts were passed in England, the Third Republic was established in France, constitutional monarchy was set up in Italy and Spain, and for a short time Russia under Alexander II evinced a desire for a constitutional form of government. The American constitution, too, was democratised during the same period. The influence of these movements reached Bengal not only through newspapers, magazines and books, but also through the Bengali youths who in ever-increasing number began to go to England and other Western countries for study.

The cumulative effect of the five causes noted above was seen in the rise of the national-democratic school of political thought in Bengal in the sixth decade of the nineteenth century. Rajnarain Bose claims in his 'Autobiography' the title of 'Grandfather of Nationalism in Bengal.' In 1861 he published a pamphlet, entitled 'Prospectus of a Society for the promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal.' He says that Nabagopal Mitra admitted that he (Mitra)

received the inspiration from this pamphlet in founding the Hindu Mela, the 'National Society' and the 'National Paper' in 1867.¹

Nabagopal Mitra and Bhudev Mukhopadhyay were staunch nationalists indeed, but they were against the introduction of the democratic form of government in India. We shall discuss their political thought in the next chapter.

Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan through the columns of his influential vernacular paper, the "Shomeprakash", began to popularise the national-democratic ideas in the sixties and seventies of the last century. W. C. Bonnerjee in his speech before the East India Association in 1867 demanded representative and responsible government. Jogendranath Vidyabhushan began to preach nationalism through his biographies of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Wallace and through his monthly magazine, the 'Arya Darshan.' In 1879, Lalmohan Ghosh went to England to create a favourable political atmosphere for the concession of self-governing institutions to India. Leaders of the Bengal public of this period paid greater attention to the systematic propaganda in England than their predecessors had done.

¹ Autobiography of Rajnarain Bose, p. 208. It is noteworthy that his father Nandakishore Bose and his uncle Harihar Bose came in intimate contact with Raja Rammohun Roy.

While Rajnarain Bose, Nabagopal Mitra, Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan, Sisirkumar Ghosh, Bankimchandra Chatterji and others were initiating the Bengal Public into democratic and nationalist ideas, Chandranath Bose and Bholanath Chandra were preparing the ground for the practice of economic nationalism, which has become the most prominent feature of the national movement in India since 1905.

Liberal-minded and philanthropic Englishmen continued to take the same lively interest and to extend the same kind of encouragement in this period (1861-84), as they had done in the previous period (1830-61). As in the earlier period there were the 'British Indian Society' and the 'Indian Reform Society' in England to promote Indian interest, so in this period there was the 'National Indian Association' in England. The word 'national' seems to have captivated the heart not only of Indians but also of their friends in England. In 1875 a novel kind of association known as the 'Constitutional Society of India' was formed in England. The following account of its aims, objects and members is given in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of the 17th June, 1875. "The constitutional Society of India is a loyal association founded to protect and promote the moral and material interests of India; to unite classes and races, to maintain and conserve legitimate traditions, to develop habits of corporation,

self-reliance and self-control, to collect and supply accurate information on the numerous Indian questions that are too often imperfectly understood by the Imperial Parliament and in every legal way to secure for the national and municipal claim of Indian people *and feudatories* a basis of guaranteed right and settled precedent calculated to conciliate the indispensable requirements of India with the general policy of the Empire at large." It was to consist of *Indian sovereigns in feudatory alliance with the British Crown*, of members of both houses of the Imperial Parliament, scholars and representatives of great properties, mercantile and professional classes of India together with such other gentlemen as would be elected by the governing and administrative Council of the Society. Its promoters were A. M. Sullivan, J. Roncayne, Z. O'Connor Power, M.P., F. H. Downell, M.P., J. C. Meenacshya and G. M. Tagore, Bar.-at-law.

In this period two prominent political associations, both representing the educated middle classes, were formed in Bengal. These were the Indian League and India Society. Accounts of these together with the account of the political associations in the Mofussil in Bengal are given in Chapter VI of this work.

II. *Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan*
(1820-1886).

No greater instance of the liberalising effect of the study of Western history and politics can be cited than that of Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan. He belonged to an orthodox Pandit family and having received education at the Sanskrit College became at first the Librarian and then a Professor of the same institution. He used to teach Sanskrit grammar and literature in the College. When the Calcutta University was established, Pandit Vidyabhushan along with Rev. K. M. Banerjee and Ramchandra Mitter served on the Board of Examiners in Bengali for the B. A. Examination.¹ He was deeply imbued with the traditions and culture of the Hindu society and he opposed the attempts of Keshabchandra to reform it. But his study of the history of Greece, Rome, England, France and of the British Colonies converted him into a Liberal in politics.² He gave expression to his liberal views in the 'Shomeprakash,' which he began to publish and edit from 1858. Pandit Shivanath Shastri, his nephew, says that the

¹ Calcutta University Calendar, 1859-60.

² He wrote the history of Greece and Rome in Bengali.

'Shomeprakash' exerted the greatest influence in the decade between 1860 and 1870.¹

It is generally seen that people belonging to the orthodox school hold monarchy to be the best form of government. But Dwarakanath Vidya-bhushan imbibed love of democracy from his classical studies. The result of the conflicting influences of his orthodox leanings and of classical spirit was that he became an advocate of the Mixed Constitution. He held that in the ancient world public opinion was consulted in every state. The English had the Witenagemot, the Hindus had the Sabha, the Arabs the Dewan and the Romans the Senate. He condemned absolutism as the worst form of government. Oligarchy too is not conducive to the well-being of the governed, for it failed in Rome and France. It was the rule of the Roman nobility which was responsible for the deterioration of the Roman character. The government in France on the eve of the Revolution was in name monarchical but in

¹ See his article in 'Modern Review,' September, 1910. It should be noted here that in this period Harinath Majumdar, popularly known as Kangal Harinath of Kumarkhali in the Nadia District, started the "Gramavarta-prakasika" in April, 1863. In it he voiced the grievances of the rural population of Bengal. See his biography by his co-villager, Rai Jaladhar Sen Bahadur.

Raja Krishnanath Roy of Kassimbazar published in 1840 'Murshidabad Patrika' the first newspaper of the Mofussil.

reality oligarchical. The undue privileges of the French nobility imposed crushing burdens on the people. But undiluted democracy, meaning thereby the rule of the masses, too, is bad. This sort of democracy has been responsible for the bloody excesses of the French Revolution and the "present civil war in America." So Dwaraknath thinks that the mixed constitution is the best form of government. "Tacitus, indeed, doubted whether the unity of action of and division of power between the King, nobles and the people is conducive to general welfare. But the successful working of the English constitution proves that the 'mixed constitution' is the best. Moreover, the English constitution has been copied by Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Italy." So he comes to the conclusion that in India too the mixed constitution should be inaugurated.¹

In 1879 he published a monthly magazine entitled "Kalpadrum." In it he wrote an article discussing the causes which give rise to despotism. He says that if the king forgets that he is nothing but the representative of the people, that his power is based on the wealth and welfare of his subjects, and that his opinion is to coincide with the popular wishes, he becomes a tyrant. But the country in which the majority of people

¹ "Shomeprakash."

are brave, educated and powerful, the king cannot have any opportunity of forgetting his real position. If perchance the king shows a leaning towards despotism, the people do not tolerate his arbitrary conduct for long. They either make him conscious of his duty or deprive him of his power. Thus, he concludes, the form of government really depends on the character of the people. This is why in some countries monarchy prevails, while in others republicanism flourishes. He holds that in ancient India monarchy was the normal form of government indeed, but it seldom degenerated into tyranny inasmuch as the Brahmins regulated the conduct of the rulers.¹

As regards the functions of government, Vidyabhushan was an individualist. He maintains that government should not interfere in any matter excepting the machinery of government itself; and the people too should not allow the government to trespass this limit. He regrets that Indians depend too much on government. This is an evil heritage from ancient times, when the people held government responsible even for drought and premature death. Such an absolute dependence on government brings in idleness, inertia and lack of initiative. The French people,

¹ "Kalpadrum," Vol. I, p. 545 ff. Vidyabhushan's conclusion about the relation between the character of the people and the form of government seems to be an echo from Mill's *Representative Government*.

too, had depended too much on government in the past, with the result that their repeated revolutions failed to secure their liberty.¹ He does not like the Government's interference with the commerce of the nation. He condemns the guaranteed system of railway construction and does not support the proposal of excavating canals under the direct management of the Government. He holds that a joint-stock company can undertake irrigation most profitably.²

He was not quite sure as to the scope of government activity in social matters. At first, he held that even the worst social abuses should not be removed by arbitrary laws. But if the government can secure the consent of the people, it may undertake social reforms. He condemned the practice of hook-swinging as immoral, vicious and brutal, but he sought for its remedy in popular education and not in legislative interference.³ A few months later in an article he poured forth his righteous indignation on the practice of selling brides and regretted that the people of India could not themselves remove social abuses without taking the help of Government legislation. So they must be compelled by law to give up evil social practices. Those matters

¹ "Shomeprokash:" "গবর্নমেন্টের উপর কত দূর নির্ভর করা উচিত," ৩০ ভাদ্র, ১২৭০. Napoleon III was then the ruler of France.

² "Shomeprakash," 12th Jyaishta, 1270 B.S.

³ *Ibid*, 17th Bhadra, 1269 B.S.

which were not connected with religion might be brought under governmental control.¹ But in another article he condemned the attempt at the abolition of polygamy with the help of government. He expressed the apprehension that if Government were once asked to interfere in a specific social matter, it might interfere in other matters too. The people would then lose control over social life too.²

As an advocate of the 'mixed constitution,' Pandit Vidyabhushan saw the necessity of having a truly representative legislature in India. He expressed his dissatisfaction at the utter dependence of the Legislature on the Executive in India. "The Governor-General could convene the Legislative Council anywhere he liked and the members of the Legislature could not introduce any bill without the previous sanction of the Governor-General. The Legislative Council had been instituted because the Governor-General could not discharge the law-making and executive functions equally. If both the Legislative Council and the Governor-General be the representatives of the Queen, why should one representative dominate over the other?"³ He adduced other reasons for the establishment of fully representative legislature with full control over taxation and

¹ "Shomeprakash," 19th Falgun, 1269 B.S.

² *Ibid*, 19th Sraban, 1270 B. S.

³ *Ibid*, 8th Paus, 1269 B. S.

expenditure. He shows that the criterion of a civilised government is the observance of the principle of 'no taxation without representation.' "This principle is conducive not only to the happiness of the subjects but also to the stability of the government. If taxes are raised and spent with the consent of the people, a close identity of interest between the government and the governed follows.¹ People would then pay taxes gladly without any demur according to the necessities of the government. Government, too, would find that their duty would be discharged simply by submitting accounts. There could be no better means of stabilising government than the observance of the great constitutional principle."² Another argument which he brought forward in favour of establishing representative legislature was the example of the autonomy of the British Colonies. If representative and responsible government could operate successfully in Africa, Canada and Australia, why should it not succeed in India? He pointed out the successful working of the British Indian Association to show the fitness of Indians for representative government, it is only by practical experience that a nation acquires the capacity of self-government.

He liked to have some Indian representatives in the British Parliament to correct the

¹ "Shomeprakash," 31st Asadh, 1269 B. S.

² *Ibid*, 9th Chaitra, 1270 B. S. (21st March, 1864).

misconceptions which led to the enactment of laws prejudicial to the interests of India.¹ But he knew that such a suggestion would not be welcomed by the authorities. So he suggested later on that the Indian public should raise a monthly subscription of Rs. 3,000 and send three representatives to England to explain the Indian views correctly to the British public.² This was but a part of his political programme. He would not be satisfied with anything less than a truly representative legislative body in India.³ It is curious to note that he opposed the establishment of separate provincial legislatures on the ground that it would impede the progress of national unity.⁴

A free press, according to him, is the only means of securing good government and preventing revolution. He repeats the argument of Raja Rammohan to show that if the government remove the grievances represented in the press, the people would remain contented.⁵

Like many other Indian political writers, Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan was also an advocate of the extension of the jury system. He supports his contention by arguing that the case

¹ "Shomeprakash," 31st Asadh, 1269 B. S.

² *Ibid*, 28th Magh, 1269 B. S.

³ *Ibid*, 14th Paus, 1270 B. S. and 22nd Asadh, 1287 B. S.

⁴ *Ibid*, 22nd Agrahayan, 1270 B. S.

⁵ *Ibid*, 12th Jyaistha, 1270 B. S.

which is decided by the many is judged from all points of view minutely ; while the intellect of a single judge cannot penetrate into all its mysteries.¹

There was a general demand by the Indian public for the reduction of expenditure of government after the Mutiny. Vidyabhushan too held that retrenchment was necessary, but he deprecated the attempt to reduce the salary of the Governor-General from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 12,000. He thought a reduced salary would not attract the first-rate statesmen of England. He suggested the reduction of the salary of Civilians and of the number of European soldiers.² But in 1880 he opposed the scheme of reducing the salary of Civilians on the ground that it would bring back bribery and corruption. At that time he emphasised the necessity of reducing the military expenditure only.³

Like Akshoykumar Dutt and Sisirkumar Ghosh, he, too, condemned capital punishment. He thought that the awarding of capital punishment was the sign of inability and ignorance of the government. Death sentence has been prevalent from the dawn of history, but it has not deterred men from committing murder. Unlike Akshoykumar he held that transportation should be

¹ 'Shomeprakash,' 3rd Asadh, 1269 B. S.

² *Ibid*, 16th Chaitra, 1270 B. S.

³ *Ibid*, 12th Aswin, 1287 B. S.

sufficient punishment for the most heinous crimes. But the guilty persons should be transported to a place where they could become useful to society by being employed in agricultural pursuits.¹

Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan was one of the earliest champions of education of the masses. He held that it was useless spending government money on the education of the sons of the landed aristocracy. Most of them were idle, licentious and polygamous. Those few amongst them who were so inclined might receive education at their own expenses. So Government should try to educate the middle and the poorer classes. If the latter were educated, the higher classes, would educate themselves out of shame.² Along with literary education, physical training should also be imparted to students in schools.³

We find very few original ideas in the writings of Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan. But he had the great power of educating the people by popularising the political principles of the liberal school.

III. Rev. Lalbehari De.

Lalbehari De, the famous author of the "Govinda Samanta," was a student of Dr. Alexander Duff and accepted Christianity under

¹ "Shomeprakash," 12th Jyaistha, 1287 B.S.

² *Ibid*, 28th Jyaistha, 1269 B.S.

³ *Ibid*, 27th Sraban, 1269 BS..

his influence. He was an eminent educationist like his co-religionist, Dr. K. M. Banerjee. Dr. K. M. Banerjee and Lalbehari De accepted a foreign faith indeed, but being influenced by the spirit of the time demanded the establishment of a "National Church of India." The latter fought for equality of status of Indian missionaries with European missionaries and gained his point, though he had to accept a lower salary.

Lalbehari De was neither a political agitator nor a political philosopher. But his writings reveal an intimate acquaintance with the political thought of Plato, Aristotle, Sir Thomas More and John Stuart Mill. When men like Digambar Mitra, Kishorichand Mitra and Sisirkumar Ghosh opposed the compulsory vernacular education of the masses, Lalbehari made efforts to induce the Government to take the responsibility of educating the masses. He delivered two lectures on 'Primary education in Bengal' and 'Compulsory education' on the 10th December, 1868, and 19th January, 1869, before the Bethune Society and the Bengal Social Science Association respectively. The subject-matter of these lectures comes within our scope because he referred to and discussed in these lectures whether "education is to be made a civil right, and how far legislative interference is expedient." ¹

¹ Proceedings of the Bethune Society, Nov. 10, 1859 to April 20, 1869, p. 100.

The question of primary education acquired importance when Sir John Lawrence, in a communication, dated the 28th April, 1868, emphasised the need of educating the masses, declared the incompetency of the State Exchequer to sustain the burden of education, and called upon the Bengal Government to take speedy measures for chalking out a plan of national education by levying an educational cess on land. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal referred the matter to the British Indian Association. The latter passed the following Resolution on it: "That the compulsory taxation for education was unnecessary, inasmuch as the existing voluntary system together with Government grants-in-aid was able alone to accomplish the object ; and secondly, the proposed educational cess on land was a direct infringement of a solemn covenant of Government, confirmed by the British Parliament." The 'immediate object of Lalbehari De's lectures was to combat these opinions. Kishorichand Mitra had said in the British Indian Association : "The lower strata of the social fabric must be permeated through the higher strata. Educate the upper and middle classes, and the lower classes will be instructed and elevated." Lalbehari replied to this by observing that a similar sentiment was expressed thirty years ago by the old Council of Education, which shelved Mr. Adam's scheme of vernacular education, and more recently by Lord Canning in an

address at the meeting of the Convocation of the Calcutta University. But the education of the masses had not been advanced by the education of the classes.

Mr. De showed the importance of educating the masses by defining the relation between the individual and the society. He said before the Bengal Social Science Association : "As soon as a child is ushered into being, he becomes a member of human society ; and when he grows up and acts for himself, he exercises an influence, beneficial or otherwise, on other members of that society. An educated man whose mind has been cultivated, who is acquainted with his own duties and rights, and with those of his fellowmen, cannot but exercise a salutary influence on the community in which he moves; whereas an uneducated man, whom nothing but his erect form distinguishes from the brutes around him, proves very often a curse, at all events an encumbrance and a drag on society." Such being the importance of educating an individual for the welfare of the community, Mr. De concludes that it is "the duty of the guardians of society, that is, of the State, to interfere in the matter and to insist upon every parent educating his children." He then shows by quoting Aristotle and Mill that from ancient times political philosophers have recognised the making of provision for education as a function of government. He

again reiterates his view : “ In order therefore, to make the people of Bengal self-reliant, they must be educated, and as they cannot educate themselves, the State must do the work for them.”¹

Lalbehari De also maintains that the spread of education would diminish the number of crimes. He said : “ If we spend 60 lakhs every year for catching rogues and thieves, I submit, it is not too much to spend that sum in teaching Her Majesty’s subjects to be honest and useful citizens.” At that time there was a proposal for erecting cellular type of jails. Referring to this he said : “ Why waste the money of the public in adding to the severity of the punishment of burglars and dacoits, when the same money might be more profitably spent upon the education of the people, which would prevent them from becoming burglars and dacoits? for I believe that schools, and not jails, whether cellular or other, are the best preventives of crime.”²

Mr. Howell in his “ Note on the State of Education in India during 1866-67,” referred to the colleges and schools of India as “State charities.” Lalbehari De held that the people have got a right to be educated at Government expense. He said : “ I should like to ask Mr. Howell—

¹ Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, 1864.

² Proceedings of the Bethune Society, 1859-1868, p. 112.

Who paid the revenue from which the State is giving the charity? Is it the people of England or the people of India?"¹ But he was not averse to fresh taxation for imparting compulsory primary education. In reply to the claim of the Zamindars to be exempted from any fresh scheme of taxation he said: "The Permanent Settlement may make them liable or may not make them liable to pay—I decide not the question—but surely there is a higher law than the law of the Revenue Code. There is the law of Moral Justice and this higher law demands that every Zamindar in the country should bear a large part of the expense of educating the Ryot."²

As regards the principle of introducing compulsion in securing attendance of all boys of school-going age, he maintains that the principle would not be foreign to the feeling and sentiment of the people of Bengal. The people of Bengal had lived for centuries under a despotic system of government. "So far from looking upon Government as a necessary evil, like John Bull, he looks upon it as his Ma-Bap, his father and mother. Amongst such a Government-ridden people, the voluntary principle must be an unmeaning phrase."

His scheme of compulsory system of primary education was as follows: All boys between the

¹ *Ibid*, p. 116.

² *Ibid*, p. 119.

age of 6 and 12 should be compelled to attend schools; for educating them 40,000 primary schools, 80 normal schools for training the teachers, and 80 vernacular high schools would be required; the expenses of these together with scholarships worth rupees three lakhs and cost of inspection, another three lakhs, would be sixty lakhs of rupees. He proposed that 10 lakhs should be raised in the shape of fees from students, Government should contribute 21 lakhs, the Zamindars should pay two per cent. of the land revenue and thus contribute 7 lakhs, and 22 lakhs should be raised by enhancing the salt-tax by two annas in the rupee.

IV. *Asutosh Mukherjee.*

Asutosh Mukherjee, the brilliant namesake of the still more brilliant Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay, was the first person to receive the Premchand Roychand Scholarship in the year 1868. He was a distinguished pleader of the Calcutta High Court. He wrote many articles on law, jurisprudence and political science in the *Calcutta Review* and the *Mookerjee's Magazine*. He is also the author of the following books:—(1) The Annals of British Land Revenue Administration in Bengal, 1698-1793; (2) An Examination of the Principles and Policy of the Bengal Tenancy Bill, written at the request of the Central Committee of Landholders; (3) The Position of

Women in Bengal Society. His political ideas, discussed below, are taken mainly from his articles on "Mr. Justice Markby's Elements of Law," published in September, 1872, and on "Liberty, Equality and Faternity" published in the *Mookerjee's Magazine* in August, 1873.

Like the other educated youngmen of his time, he was a devout disciple of John Stuart Mill. When James Fitz-james Stephen wrote his famous criticism of Mill's theory of Liberty, Asutosh defended his master with great skill and ingenuity in the *Mookerjee's Magazine* (August, 1873).

Asutosh was an individualist. He did not like to invest society with the power of coercing an individual even to lead a moral life. He did not believe that society can exercise its power with such a moderation as to welcome departures from the standard of conduct, followed by the majority of its members. He put forward his own idea in the following words: "But this supposes society to be endowed with such a degree of moderation, liberality and wisdom and such an accurate and scientific knowledge of the moral and emotional condition and needs of the individual, as society has never and nowhere displayed, nor taking the most sanguine view of the matter, may be expected to display at any future time with which we need now concern ourselves." ¹

¹ *Mookerjee's Magazine*, August, 1873, p. 384.

With Mill he believed that an individual member of society can indulge in vice without doing harm to others. He wrote: "If their natural infirmity is to prompt them to hurt themselves only—if they cannot help indulging in vice, they deserve pity for their misfortune, which it would be a baseness and cruelty to aggravate by the addition of social persecution."¹ He came to the conclusion: "Coercion will never do. The enforced abstinence from personal vices during the prevalence of Puritanism in England naturally resulted in the excesses of the Restoration; and similar antecedents will always and everywhere be followed by similar consequences."²

¹ The life of the writer affords an excellent refutation to this theory about "self-regarding" action. No individual can, indeed, do harm to himself without injuring the larger interests of Society. The writer took to drinking, and, it is said, that he died a premature death owing to this evil habit. During the period of which we are treating, he was the only writer who showed signs of developing into an original thinker in political philosophy. His drinking habit certainly injured Society by cutting off one of the most brilliant students of political science from the world at an early age. This remark, I admit with great regret, is extremely uncharitable; but my admiration for the writings of Asutosh has compelled me to make it.

² This statement might be an attack on Keshab-chandra Sen's ideal of puritanism, which was preached

Asutosh was a democrat but he would not have liked the type of State Socialism, which is now practised by democratic England. He apprehended that if socialistic opinions be super-added to the democratic feeling, the majority might come to regard the possession of more than a limited amount of property as infamous. Curiously enough he was a believer in the theory of legislative interference for effecting social improvement, as is evident from his conception of Law as 'the mighty engine of social improvement.' He held that whatever might be the object of the law-maker, "he must be thoroughly conversant with the nature of the means employed, in order to be sure of achieving those ends. Jurisprudence is the science which professes to give him the requisite instructions." ¹

He believed that the existing systems of law were defective inasmuch as these hold a man liable without reference to the mental quality of his actions and without reference to culpable intention or inadvertence. He proves his theory by the following arguments: "If people were to be punished for acts and forbearances, which they neither knew, nor might have known, to be violations of some duty cast upon them by the

and enforced among his own followers about the time of the writing of this essay.

¹ "Mookerjee's Magazine, September 1872, p. 76.

law, they would be punished not according to law, but apart from and quite independently of law. A law is a command. A command is a wish, expressed by an intelligent being, to an intelligent being, that the latter should do or abstain from something, some evil being held out as an inducement to compliance with the wish. Now the inducement cannot operate unless the party commanded, knows, or may know, if he attends or adverts as he ought, that what he is going to do or omit, would be a non-compliance with the wish of his superior. Without intention or inadvertence, therefore, there cannot be any legal liability. True, no existing system of law realises completely this pure idea of liability; but, so far as it fails to do so, it does not deserve the name of law.”¹

He does not seem to have been much in favour of judge-made law, as its flexibility is, according to him, only a euphemism for variability, alterability and uncertainty. He preferred the legal system prevailing on the Continent, because, “hard cases would seldom make bad law under the continental system.”² He complained that the sense in which the British Indian Courts are called Courts of Equity as well as of Law has not been defined. “Neither the Privy Council, nor any Act of the

¹ *Ibid*, p. 88.

² *Ibid*, p. 81.

Governor-General of India in Council has up to this time declared what is the precise nature of the equity, which these courts are bound to administer." He further shows the difference between the Roman, English and the so-called system of Indian Equity. "The Indian judge is directed to draw up 'justice, equity and good conscience' only when the existing law, however harsh, immoral or unjust its provisions may be, fails him, whereas the English Chancellor and the Roman Praetor built up their complicated systems of equity avowedly with the views of redressing the harshness, immorality or injustice of the existing law." ¹

Asutosh was one of the earliest critics of Austin's theory of sovereignty. Barker and Laski have given some prominence to the argument that the state is not sovereign because there are always things which the state cannot do owing to the opposition from some part of the community over which it claims sovereignty. Asutosh hinted at this type of argument long before these two writers. In criticising Austin's definition of sovereignty he wrote: "But what is the least number of men that will satisfy the definition? What is the least fraction of that number that may be reckoned as its bulk? How long and how often is obedience to be rendered in order that it may be habitual? It is impossible to give precise

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

answers to these questions. Austin's discussion of them is only a reiteration in various forms of this impossibility." ¹ We admit the validity of the last two questions; but as regards the first question, it may be pointed out that Austin stated that the determinate human superior is not to be in a habit of obedience to a like superior. It is difficult for a very small community to maintain its independence against others; this consideration should define, though not exactly, the least number of men that will satisfy Austin's definition.

V. *Monomohan Ghosh and Lalmohan Ghosh.*

Monomohan and Lalmohan were the two gifted sons of Ramlochan Ghosh, an intimate friend of Raja Rammohun Roy.² Both the brothers sat for the Indian Civil Service Examination, but both of them failed to secure admission into the Service. Monomohan went to England for the first time in March 1862 and Lalmohan in June 1866. Both of them attained fame as Barristers in the Calcutta High Court. The former wrote a book entitled, "The Open Competition for the Civil Service of India;" and it was published by Trübner & Co., in 1866. In it he protested against the reduction of marks in Oriental subjects,

¹ *Ibid*, p. 77.

² Ramgopal Sanyal's "Bengal Celebrities" (1889). Shivanath Shastri's "Life of Ramtanu Lahiri," p. 346.

prescribed for the I.C.S. Examination. Monomohan was one of the promoters of the Indian Association. In pursuance of the idea of Raja Rammohun Roy, he pressed for the separation of the Executive from the Judiciary, and published in 1884 a book entitled "Desirability of separating Judicial from Executive and Police functions of Magistrates in India." In 1885 he visited England for the second time and taking advantage of his sojourn in England, the Indian Association asked him to act as a delegate of Bengal and to represent Indian grievances to the British public. Ramgopal Sanyal, who came in intimate contact with him gives the following account of his political ideas: "As regards his political ideas, he has a firm faith in the justice and honesty of British rulers, but the Anglo-Indian idea of excluding the people from offices of great trust and responsibility is a mistake. In course of time, Mr. Ghosh expects that the Indian constitution will be analogous to that of the colonies."¹

His brother, Lalmohan, went to England in 1879 and in association with David Wedderburn, Hodgson Pratt and F. W. Chesson, led a deputation to Lord Hartington in July, 1880. The deputation prayed for the repeal of the Press Act and of the Arms Act and asked for raising the age limit of the Indian Civil Service. It laid the greatest emphasis on the necessity of conceding

¹ *Ibid*, p. 25.

representative legislatures to India. The Memorial, penned by Lalmohan Ghosh, stated: "We believe the time has arrived, when an experiment may be safely made in this direction by admitting elected representative members to the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, in a certain proportion to the nominated members. At present each Local Government nominates two or three Indians to serve as members of the Council, who are often officials, and, with a few exceptions, generally selected more on account of their rank and wealth than for their fitness and capacity.¹ Although some of these members have, from

¹ To illustrate the truth of this remark it may be mentioned that in the Governor-General's Council the only Indian members were Nawab of Rampore, Maharaja of Burdwan, Raja Sahib Dyal Bahadoor and Maharaja of Vizianagram in 1864. The first and, last mentioned noblemen delivered each one short speech during the whole period of their membership; while the Maharaja of Burdwan, though retaining his seat in 1864, 1865 and 1866, did not open his mouth at all. See Abstract and Proceedings of the Governor-General's Council, 1864-66.

The following list of members of the Bengal Legislative Council will also partially illustrate the truth of the remark:—

1879. Ameer Ali, Moulavi Ameer Hossein, Raja Pramathanath Roy, Mohinimohan Roy and Kristodas Pal.

1880. Syed Moulavi Ameer Hossein, Mohinimohan Roy (later on replaced by the Maharaja of Darbhanga), Kristodas Pal and Pearymohan Mukherjee.

time to time, rendered useful service to the State, it is obvious that, so long as all the members are nominated by the Government, however carefully the selection may be made, the Native members, who are so appointed cannot feel, or be credited with, that independence which it is essential they should enjoy, nor can their opinion possess the weight and authority, which belong to the voice of representatives elected by the people." The Memorial pointed out that by introducing representative system in Indian and Provincial Legislatures the Government would be able to ascertain the real wants and opinions of the people, and that it would be able to secure for its legislative and fiscal measures the sanction and support of public opinion in India. In a speech, delivered by Lalmohan at Willis' Rooms, London, on July 23, 1879, an appeal, was made to the constitutional principles of England in the following words: "Nor can England, without being utterly false to all her traditions, to her history, and to herself, continue to refuse to us that boon of a constitutional government which it is the proudest boast and the greatest glory of this country to possess."

1881. Pearymohan Mookherjee, Kristodas Pal and Ameer Ali.

1882. Maharaja of Darbhanga, Kristodas Pal, Bhudev Mukherjee, Mahomed Yusuf and Harbuns Sahai.

See Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council.

The concrete proposal of the Deputation, referred to above, was that towns enjoying municipal self-government should be formed into constituencies for electing members to the provincial Legislatures. The number of members, so elected, should bear a certain proportion to the members nominated by the Government. As regards the constitution of the Indian Legislature, the Deputation proposed: "We would also recommend the introduction of the principle of representation within similar limits as regards the constitution of the Supreme Legislative Council, so that a certain proportion of its members may be elected representatives of the different presidencies."¹ Mr. W. A. J. Archbold, in his 'Outlines of Indian Constitutional History' remarks that "About 1888 discussion began with a view to enlarging the possibility of Indian advice and criticism and to the introduction of the elective system."² But the Memorial, discussed above, shows clearly that the Bengal public first demanded the enlargement of the Councils as early as 1880. It is to be noticed that the Councils Act of 1892, 55 and 56 Vic., C. 14, virtually granted representation to the Municipalities in the Provincial Councils and allowed

¹ Passages cited above have all been taken from the "Speeches by Lalmohan Ghosh," edited by Asutosh Banerjee, Calcutta, 1883.

² Archbold's "Outlines of Indian Constitutional History," p. 157.

members of the Provincial Legislatures to send their representatives to the Supreme Council, as prayed for in the Memorial.¹

VI. *Jogendranath Vidyabhusan.*

Jogendranath Vidyabhusan took his M.A. degree from the Sanskrit College and entered Government service as a Munsif. But he resigned his post and adopted journalism as a profession. The influence of his education in the Sanskrit College is reflected in his Sanskritized Bengali style only, otherwise, in radicalism of views he surpasses even the Philosophical Radicals of the old Hindu College. By quoting Charvaka, he tried to prove the fraudulent character of the ancient Brahmans.² He believed Positivism to be the coming Religion of the world.³ He advocated free love and denied the necessity of marriage. Like Judge Lindsay of the present day he thought that the lovers should be allowed to separate themselves, if they liked, without going through the formality

¹ This is but one of the many instances of the response of law to Public Opinion in India. But this side of constitutional history of British India has been totally neglected in all the works (by eminent men like Cowell, Ilbert and Archbold) on the subject.

² "Arya-darshan," "Atit o Vartaman Bharat"—Falgun, 1285 B.S.

³ *Ibid.*

of divorce. He held that love can never be everlasting and that real love is possible only where both the parties are independent.¹ He went further than Mill and Bankim in condemning hereditary succession, which he held responsible for the existence of drones, intemperance and prostitution.² As regards political agitation, he drew the attention of the Bengali people to the examples of Mazzini, and Garibaldi.³

He made an investigation into the origin of the state in India. He held that when the Aryans first came to India they defeated the aborigines and conquered their lands, which were then divided among the heads of different Aryan families. The head of each family tried to increase the number of his dependents with a view to strengthen his power, and exercised the most absolute authority over them. This gave rise to the Patriarchal Government (he translates it as *Parijana-tantra*).⁴ The family consisted of uncles, brothers, numerous wives, taken from all the *varnas*, eight different kinds of sons, disciples and slaves. It was huge in size, and discipline was maintained in it only by the iron will of the patriarch, who could sell or

¹ *Ibid*, "Pranay," Shraban, 1284 B.S.

² *Ibid*, "Atit o Vartaman Bharat."

³ Sir Surendranath Banerjea in "A Nation in Making" claims that it was he who directed Jogendranath to write a biography of Mazzini.

⁴ "Arya-darshan," Kartik, 128 B. S., p. 309.

make a gift of his sons and daughters. Three causes, according to Jogendranath, held the family together. These were fear of the aborigines, holding of property jointly by all the members,¹ and the necessity of keeping the sacrificial fire always burning. Later on, the patriarchal family developed into the village community. Then the writer sets himself to the solution of the problem as to why feudalism came into existence in Europe, while village communities were developed in ancient India. The solution he offers is this: the Teutonic conquerors of the Roman provinces were less civilized than the conquered, and hence they accepted many laws and customs of Rome. Out of this mixture of Roman and Teutonic customs arose feudalism. But in India the conquering Aryans were superior in civilization to the conquered aborigines. So their customs remained unaffected. Moreover, the law of primogeniture prevailed in Mediaeval Europe, while in India there was the law of equal division

¹ Jogendranath quoted Vriddha Manu :

“ ভাৰ্য্যা পুত্রশ্চ দাসশ্চ ত্রয় একধনাঃ স্বতাঃ ।

যন্তে সমধিগচ্ছন্তি বশ্ত তে তশ্চ তদ্ধনম্ ॥”

and proved the absolutism of the patriarch (p. 96, *Jaish-thya*, 1281, *Arya-darshan*). In the next page he says that the members of the family held property jointly. This is certainly contradictory. He tried to reconcile the two views by observing that even where the father bequeathed his property equally to all his sons, they lived together. This is against Maine's theory of patriarchal society.

of property amongst all the sons. Hence, in Europe there was a good deal of inequality, which gave rise to constitutional struggles and ultimately paved the way for democracy. But in India the calm and squalid life in village communities was undisturbed by any such struggle and so it bred inglorious indifferentism and fatalism. These circumstances led to the rise of despotism. By the time when the *Manu Samhita* was written, despotism had become the normal form of government and the village communities had decayed.¹

In 1880, he wrote an article, entitled “ Who gave power to Government ? ” He answers the question by asserting that the people have given power to government, that sovereignty lies with the people and that government is nothing but the representative of the people.²

Jogendranath was a strong advocate of equality. He held the inequality of caste, of wealth and of sex, along with difference in language, dress, and governmental system responsible for the present degeneration of India. This can be remedied only by promoting equality, which in its turn will give unity. But before one could expect India to be united, Indians must first of all learn the lesson of nationalism under a strong foreign government. Otherwise, even if the

¹ “*Arya-Darshan*,” “*Palli-samaj*,” Kartik, 1281.

² “*Arya-Darshan*,” *Jaishtya*, 1287 B.S.

British Government graciously concede independence to Indians, they would be brought under the iron heels of the Raja of Nepal or of the Sindhia. So, under the shelter of a powerful foreign government efforts should be made to uproot the very principle of monarchy, to equalize the high with the low and prepare the ground for sowing the seed of republicanism in India.¹

Early in 1875 he wrote an article on "Unity of India." At that time the talk about founding an all-India political association of the educated middle classes was in the air. Jogendranath proposed that such an association should be formed and like the Oriental Congress it should hold its annual sittings in different places like Calcutta, Allahabad, Lahore, Bombay, Madras and Lucknow. It should agitate on questions relating to the improvement of different provinces and communities and send Memorials to the Government from time to time. The Government would certainly accept the opinion of such a body as public opinion.² He proposed in 1879 that Hindi should be the *lingua franca* of India.³ About that time

¹ *Ibid*, Falgun, 1285 ; "Atit o Vartaman Bharat."
 "স্বতরাং রাজ্যতন্ত্রের মূল ছিন্ন করিয়া, নিম্নোক্তকে এক সমতল ক্ষেত্রে পরিণত করিয়া, ভারতক্ষেত্রে ভবিষ্য প্রকাণ্ড সাধারণতন্ত্রের বীজধারণোপযোগী করিয়া রাখিতে হইবে।"

² *Ibid*, Vaisakh, 1282 ; "Bharater Ekata."

³ *Ibid*, Falgun, 1285 ; "Atit o Vartaman Bharat."

Swami Dayananda, whose mother-tongue was Gujrati, was also trying to make Hindi the common language of India.

VII. *Chandranath Bose.*

Chandranath Bose was the first student of the Calcutta University who secured a first class in the M.A. Examination in History. Having taken his M.A. degree in 1866, he secured the post of the Translator of the Calcutta High Court. He played a prominent part in the revival of Hinduism. He explained the spiritual and cultural significance of Hinduism in his Bengali work, entitled "Hindutva." He was a friend and literary disciple of Bankimchandra and acquired great renown as a thoughtful writer of Bengali books on culture, civilization and literary criticism.

The importance of Chandranath Bose in the history of political thought of Bengal lies in the fact that he was the first to draw the attention of the public to the necessity of encouraging Indian manufactures. He emphasised the duty of the Government to encourage Indian industries and explained the political significance of industrial development of India in a paper on the "Present social and economical condition of Bengal and its probable future" which was read before the Social Science Association on the 21st of January, 1869.

We have shown before that almost all the political thinkers of Bengal devoted their attention to the problem of the function of government in relation to education. But none of them stated so frankly and emphatically the political significance of mass education in India as did Chandranath in the paper referred to above. He said that education of the masses would promote a community of feeling and sentiment between the classes and the masses. He further stated: "An enlightened sense of material suffering will excite mutual sympathy amongst our peasants and a constant and extensive interchange of thoughts and feelings, which when educated, they would be able to maintain amongst themselves, will raise upon the basis of that sympathy, a spirit of combination which, by removing that individual or rather, family segregation, which forms a marked characteristic of agricultural life in Bengal, will effect important changes in the economy of agriculture, and succeed, by the force of a resulting opinion, in establishing satisfactory relations between the agriculturist on the one hand, and the landlord and the capitalist on the other."

He was not a believer in the *Laissez-faire* theory of government. He believed that Indian industries could be developed only by the active sympathy of the Government. He appealed to the moral sense of the British Indian Government in order to secure its encouragement for Bengal

industries. He explained that probable advantages of developing manufactures in Bengal would be seen in four directions. First, "it will open a field of labour, which will invite a large amount of capital, which now either remains idle or is spent most unproductively." Secondly, the wealthy manufacturers would improve the condition of the peasants by introducing new and scientific machines for agriculture, and would undertake their education with a view to teach them the use of such implements. Thirdly, it would open new fields for employment of the ever-increasing number of educated persons. Fourthly, it would promote better relations between England and Bengal. This point deserves to be quoted in his own words. "She (India) is yet only a hewer of wood and drawer of water for English civilisation in the East. But once let manufactures be established in Bengal, let Bengal once know that the cloth which she wears, the paper on which she writes, and the knife with which she cuts will be no longer prepared for her by England, and she will perceive the necessity of looking beyond the resources of her own art and skill, she will be forced to study the progress of modern art and science, to consult the whole of Europe on the methods of manufacturing industry, to examine Nature with a minute and scrutinising eye. When Bengal becomes a country of manufactures, she will begin to think and to act ; then will she rise in the

esteem of civilised Europe ; then, for the first time in her history, will she acquire a position of dignity and importance in the great commonwealth of nations. Then chiefly, will Bengal find it necessary to cultivate the acquaintance she has formed with England—the great mistress of the commercial world. Then will England herself form with her a friendship more close, more intellectual than subsists at present, and then will that friendship be placed on that basis of mutual esteem and respect, without which friendship is a serious misnomer.” This might be called the birth-cry of Swadeshim in Bengal. The note he sounded here was taken up four years later by Bholanath Chandra, a man belonging to the traditional manufacturing and trading class of Bengal.

VIII, Bholanath Chandra

(1822-1910).

The fatherhood of the Swadeshi movement, in its purely economic significance may be safely attributed, I think, to Bholanath Chandra. He was a chip of the old block—a student of the Hindu College, which institution he entered in 1832 and left in 1842. He was a friend of Michael Madhusudan Datta, Kishorichand Mitra, Anandakrishna Bose, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay and Gourdas Bysak. Sj. Manmathanath Ghosh has written an excellent biography of this brilliant writer and

eminent scholar. In 1873-74 he contributed a series of articles on commerce and manufactures of India in the *Mookerjee's Magazine*. In these articles he discussed the past history, present condition and future possibilities of Indian commerce and manufacture. We are, however, concerned with his articles on the present and future of Indian manufactures and commerce only.

Bholanath Chandra observes that the condition of Indian manufactures "has never been broached in Native literature, never been treated of in any Native Magazine."¹ He takes the Indian-managed Press to task for neglecting this important public question and in his exhortation to them on their duty in this respect laid the foundation of economic Swadeshism. He writes: "The Native English vernacular papers should preach for the founding of independent Native Banks, Native Companies and Corporations, Native Mills and Factories, and Native Chambers of Commerce in the Presidencies. They should denounce the insensate practice of preferring foreign goods to home-made manufactures. They should inculcate the discipline of self-denial, and the cultivation of patriotic sentiments. They should collect and compile details of Indian urban life, to draw public attention to the helpless condition of our weavers, blacksmiths and mechanics. They should point

¹ *Mookerjee's Magazine*, 1873, p. 111.

out the enormous and unceasing drain upon the profits of Indian labour, to show that the country is growing poorer year by year, and thoroughly expose the statistical delusion of the authorities. They should sedulously strive for the subversion of the policy, which, in addition to our political slavery, has steeped the country also in an industrial slavery,"¹ He went to the extreme length of denouncing foreign capital for the development of Indian Industries. He wrote :—" I want no foreign capital to resort to India ; her own capital should be created. I want no foreign imports which she can manufacture herself at home."²

Bholanath's economic doctrine is an extreme and crude type of Mercantilism. He wrote :—" The richest country is that which has to sell everything to others, and buy nothing from them. Such once was the economic position which India

¹ *Ibid*, p. 110.

² *Ibid*, p. 235.

The extremist tendency of his writings was condemned by Kissen Mohan Mullick, an eminent man of business, then a septuagenarian, who wrote :—" Let us act prudently and in harmony with those under whose rule and protection it has pleased Providence to place us, and we shall not fail to prosper and be happy. But it is to be pitied that talking at random against power and policy is becoming a chronic disorder with the more enlightened of our present generation."—*Ibid*, p. 210.

occupied.”¹ “The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” at least conveys a different impression.

Bholanath pleaded for the legislative protection of infant industries of India and asked the Government to revise the tariff in such a way as to afford the Indian industries protection against foreign competition.² He denounced the *laissez-faire* theory of Government in the following words: “To Government, I have to represent that its functions are not merely negative and restrictive, but positive and active. Its duty is not simply to protect our life, liberty and property and act the part of a policeman. The doctrine of ‘administrative nihilism’ as well as the doctrine of the ‘divine right of monarchs’ are now numbered with fallacies and patriarchal theories. In the code of modern politics, the state is said to exist for its people—to be bound to render them every active help in its power, and remove every evil by legislation, and promote all possible good by necessary institutions and projects.”³ Having thus laid the theoretical basis of his appeal for protection, he indicates his plan of the actual measures which government should take in order to promote Indian industries. He claims:—“It is bound to do away with our cooly emigration to the West Indies and

¹ *Ibid*, p. 91.

² *Ibid*, p. 109, and 1874, p. 378.

³ *Ibid*, 1874, p. 376.

Mauritius, in order to enable us to re-establish our own sugar trade. It is bound to make treaties in our favour with Siam and other foreign powers. It is bound to maintain an independent commercial policy in the true interest of India. It is bound to consult Native opinion and admit a Native representative of commerce in the Legislative Council. In short it is bound to govern India upon the principle of European equity and equality.' ' ¹ Further, he demanded that the Government should give practical education, to teach the people to build ships, to navigate the ocean, and to carry the merchandise of their country into Europe and America. ²

¹ *Ibid*, 1874, p. 379.

² *Ibid*, p. 378.

CHAPTER V

CRITICS OF THE LIBERAL THOUGHT (1861-1884.)

I. Introduction.

Liberalism in Europe as well as in India, in the period between 1815 and 1884, aimed at securing democratic and popular control over government; and in countries like Italy, Ireland, Poland and India, where government was in the hands of foreigners, Liberalism necessarily implied Nationalism. In the earlier chapters we have shown that those who were in favour of the democratic form of government were invariably the champions of Nationalism. But the reverse is not true ; some of the advocates of Nationalism like Nabagopal Mitra, Akshaychandra Sircar and Bhudev Mukhopadhyay were severe critics of democracy. Their hostility to democratic movement sprang from a clear grasp of the reality of the situation in India. They might be termed Realists, who in consideration of the trend of Indian history, of the widespread ignorance of the masses in India, and of the apparent want of success of democracy in the West, opposed the Liberal School of

Bengal. We shall discuss the ideas of Akshay-chandra Sircar and Nabagopal Mitra, two representatives of the Realistic school of critics of Liberal thought movement in this chapter. This school of thought was also represented by two other men, who stood head and shoulders above their contemporaries in intellectual equipment. These are Raja Rajendralala Mitra and Jogendrachandra Ghosh. Rajendralala was a class-friend of Bhudev and Michael Madhusudan in the Hindu College.¹

Rajendralala entertained a lively suspicion of the irrational type of patriotism, which in the seventies of the last century, moved the heart of many in Bengal. In a meeting, held in the Town Hall on the 2nd July, 1870, Rajendralala declared to an audience of two hundred men :— “ If patriotism means an insensate love of everything that is ours, whether good or bad, away with such patriotism. If it is to teach us to rest satisfied with our *lares and penates*, our language, and our civilisation, as they now stand the less we have of it, the better.” ² From the time of the publication of the “ Tattvabodhini Patrika ” to that of the “ Bangadarshan ” an incessant demand had been made for the larger use of

¹ The Presidency College Register, Part 1.

² Speeches by Raja Rajendralala Mitra, LL.D., C.I.E., edited by Raj Jogeshur Mitter (S. K. Lahiri & Co.) 1892, p. 29.

the Bengali language for educational and social purposes. Rajendralala, who himself edited a very useful Bengali magazine entitled the "Bibidhartha Samgraha," however, said that in Poland the Polish language is a symbol of unity of the people and as such is worth fighting for, in India "our vernaculars, on the other hand are poor and undeveloped, and serve only to divide and disunite us."¹

Jogendrachandra Ghosh (1842-1901), an intimate friend of the poet Hemchandra Banerjee, was also a critic of democracy. His standpoint is that the organisation of Hindu society is such that it emphasises duties only and not rights. "The sovereign, the Brahmana, the Purohita, the Zamindar, the Ryot, the Karta, the husband, the wife, the father, the son, each has his duties carefully defined, and in each case the least default is counted as at once a crime towards the community and a sin to the gods." Fulfilment of duty by every member of the community and implicit obedience shown to the responsible authorities, meet all the requirements of society. Democracy, which emphasises rights and not duties would thus be unsuited to the social organisation in India. His criticism of western democracy, as he understood it to be, deserves to be quoted at length. He wrote :—" To many

¹ *Ibid.*

people it appears to be a self-evident truth, that the opinion of the majority ought to prevail. But after all, it must have cost Europe a long process of development to arrive at the fundamental principle of modern democracy, that opinion should ultimately be expressed in the form of yea or nay to an appropriately framed question and that the decision of a collective body should be determined by the preponderance of votes thus declared and numbered. I do not know if the solution does not signify a sort of compromise with the well-known but dangerous alternative, *viz.*, appeal to arms, but there can hardly be any doubt, in spite of the support given to the doctrine by the now all-important school of Utilitarians, that the numeric strength of advocates is an index neither to logical nor to ethical soundness. If a poll could be taken of the whole human race most of the scientific doctrines of the day would have large majorities arrayed against them ; and as for the utilitarian doctrine which regards the happiness of any two outsiders as preferable to that of a single person, such as one's own father, mother, wife or son, the ethical value of it is certainly not patent to primitive people, like the writer, to say nothing of the further equipment of modern democratic society, the education of public opinion by means of stump oratory, special pleading, forensic strategy, banter, bullying and newspaper agitation. Whatever, therefore,

the history and worth may be of the doctrine that the claims and opinions of the majority shall prevail, one need not stand aghast at being told that unanimity has been the rule of conduct in Hindu society.”¹

While Rajendralala, Jogendrachandra, Nabagopal and Akshaychandra opposed the Liberal thought movement on philosophical and historical grounds, men were not wanting to pour ridicule and satire on the pioneers of Liberal movement in Bengal. The best specimen of such a type of criticism is a satirical poem called the “Bharat-Uddhar Kavya.” The writer thinks that the grievances, on which the Liberals agitated, were mostly imaginary. As an example of these imaginary grievances he states that the Liberals think that the extension of railway is nothing but the symbol of the bondage of India in iron chains and therefore extremely insulting to the nation.² He

¹ *Calcutta Review*, 1882, pp. 227-70, Article on “The Village Community of Bengal and Upper India.”

² Bharat-Uddhar Kavya by Ramdas Sharma, published in 1877. Pandit Shivanath Shastri in his Autobiography states that it was a satire on the Bharat Sabha of Surendranath, Anandamohan, Monomohan and himself. The passage referred to above runs as follows:—

“বিশাল ভারত-ক্ষেত্র, যাসাবধি যার,
নিয়ত হাঁটিলে প্রান্ত দেখা নাহি যায়,
লৌহের শৃঙ্খলে তার অষ্ট অঙ্গ বাধি
চলাইছে তুঙ্গপরি আশ্রয়ে শকট,

thinks that the demand for democratic and national control of government proceeds only from the unemployment of the educated youths, as these people in their misery believe that a national government would at once solve the problem of unemployment.¹

Another critic, Sambhoochandra Mookerjee, the famous editor of the 'Mookerjee's Magazine' and 'Reis and Rayyet'² based his criticism of Liberalism on the psychology of the masses in India. He wrote :—"The idea of a constitution is incomprehensible to many. I have myself failed with hundreds to make them understand clearly a republic, and a federal republic has puzzled more. My statements have been more or less openly disbelieved; the more pedantic have declared that I was talking of schemes for governing with which philosophers had amused themselves; and the

সপ্তাহের পথ হেন সঙ্কীর্ণ করেছে।
কি আর লাঘব বল, কোন অপমান
এর চেয়ে তীব্রতর বাজিবেক হৃদে। "

¹ Thus the Liberals are made to say—

"কৃষ ভাল, যদি খেতে পাই দুইবেলা,
যখন মাথার মণি, জঠরের জ্বালা
নিবারণ করে যদি; না হয় স্বাধীন
হউক ভারতবর্ষ, লুটে পুটে খাব।"

² See his biography under the heading "An Indian Journalist," by E. F. Skrine, I.C.S.

intelligent and shrewd have always hinted that there must be a king lurking somewhere in those fantastical states. A government without a king seems to (them) such a contradiction.”¹ Again, he speaks of the monarchical tradition of India: “We do not understand a government without a king, having never before been acquainted with such.”²

He then shows how loyalty is a deep-rooted sentiment with the people of India.³ Their loyalty demands the existence of a monarch, who should come in such personal contact with the people as to evoke the highest kind of loyalty. “The highest loyalty, that which is very different from the allegiance of calculation or expediency, is attachment, for the person of the sovereign in constitutional or republican countries to the machinery of the supreme national power. While our people are not politically advanced enough for attachment to a machinery, their sovereign and the supreme machinery both have their home far from our shores.”⁴

¹ ‘The Prince in India and to India’ by Sambhoo-chandra Mukhopadhyay (Calcutta, 1871), p. 7.

² *Ibid*, p. 114.

³ “Loyalty being but gratitude and love in the political sphere—the gratitude and love or attachment of subjects to kings—the conditions do not alter by change of sphere.”—*Ibid*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 119.

Another critic of Liberalism, belonging to the loyalist school, was Raja Saurindramohan Tagore, a great master of Indian music. He wrote a learned book, entitled "Hindu Loyalty" and published it in 1883. In it he showed from appropriate texts from the Manu Samhita, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Brahmavaibarta Purana, Kamandakiya Nitisara and Kalika Purana that loyalty is one of the highest virtues. He proposed that loyalty should be taught to the children in schools and that they should sing a Bengali version, rendered and set to music by himself, of "God save the Queen" anthem. He preached the divinity of kingship and the necessity of passive obedience on the part of the subjects. He wrote:—"Should a king through ignorance or anger do a wrong to his subjects, it behoves them to overlook it, and they should never do wrong to the king."¹ Towards the end of his book he wrote:—"Those who have the slightest regard for our sacred and time-honoured Shastras, will consider it a sin of the deepest dye to treat kings with disregard, and will consider it their bounden duty to obey the prince in all parts. Now when our Gracious Queen Empress Victoria has been placed by Heaven on the throne, and when she has inherited the divine sceptre, who can deny that there is divinity in Her?"²

¹ "Hindu Loyalty," by Raja Saurindramohan Tagore, Calcutta, 1883, p. 28.

² *Ibid*, p. 45.

Besides the Realist and Loyalist schools of critics of Liberalism, there was a very powerful group of opponents of democracy, who transformed the British Indian Association into an organisation of Zamindars alone. After the death of Harishchandra Mukherjee in 1861, Digambar Mitra and Kristodas Pal gradually became the most active and prominent members of the British Indian Association. We shall discuss their political ideas in some detail in this chapter. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay belongs to this period, but as his "Samajik Prabandha" and "Bibidha Prabandha," which contain his political theories were published in 1892 and 1904, we cannot include his political thought in this volume.

II. Nabagopal Mitra.

Nabagopal Mitra made the word 'National' popular amongst the educated classes in Bengal. He was one of the founders of the 'Hindu Mela' and the 'National Society' and the editor of the 'National Paper.' He was so very fond of the term 'National,' that his friends nicknamed him as 'National Nabagopal.' In the sixties of the nineteenth century Italy and Germany made heroic attempts to achieve national unity; the ideal of nationalism gained ground amongst the 'subject nationalities' within the Austrian, Russian and Ottoman empires; and Napoleon III championed

the cause of nationalism in Italy, Poland and Rumania. The European movement was bound to have its repercussion in India. Nabagopal Mitra made himself the mouthpiece of the vague yearning of the educated youths for nationalism.

Nabagopal belonged to the Brahma Samaj, which inspite of all its divisions, retained throughout the nineteenth century the impress of the moderate political views of Raja Rammohun Roy. Being a member of the Brahma Samaj, Nabagopal could keep his exuberant zeal for nationalism within constitutional limits. His political ideas contain very little that is new or original, but their significance lies in the fact that they reveal the views of a certain section of the middle classes, who did not share the opinions of Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan and Sisirkumar Ghosh.

Nabagopal holds that the chief criterion of nationalism is unity. This unity, according to him, is brought about, sustained and promoted in different peoples by different means and on different principles. The principle which promoted nationalism amongst the Greeks was love of country, amongst the Jews the Mosaic Law, amongst the Romans the love of liberty and renown and amongst the English the love of liberty.¹ He maintains that the basis of national

¹ This view reveals the superficial nature of studies of the writer. The Greeks were never formed into a

unity in India has been the Hindu religion. "Hindu nationality is not confined to Bengal. It embraces all of Hindu name and Hindu faith throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan; neither geographical position, nor the language is counted a disability. The Hindus are destined to be a religious nation." He places so much reliance on the Hindu religion as the means of promoting nationalism, because he thinks that the efficacy of the Hindu religion 'in knitting individuals into communities and communities into a nation is remarkable.' He cites the examples of the Marhattas and the Sikhs to show how under the inspiration of religion these two peoples attained unity.¹

While other political thinkers of Bengal were busy in devising schemes for establishing a democratic constitution in India, Nabagopal boldly put forward the theory that monarchy is best suited to the circumstances in India. He thought that India was being governed by an oligarchy of White men, who formed an infinitesimal minority in the vast Indian population. He held that the rule of one enlightened despot was far more preferable to that sort of oligarchical government. "The doctrine of the Divine Right of classes or

nation, the principle of nationalism never entered the mind of the Romans, and the Jews can hardly be called a nation at any period of their history.

¹ *The National Paper*, October 2, 1872.

nations is as absurd and monstrous as the other dogma (the Divine Right of kings). Both demand obedience as a dispensation of the Deity and "not as a return for services rendered." But if we are to make a choice between two evils, one master is better than many, and surely one single despot is more consistent than a large number of men, refusing to be tyrannised over, but setting up themselves as irresponsible masters over a far greater number.¹ Having thus established the superiority of autocracy over oligarchy, he turns to the discussion of the respective merits of autocracy and democracy. He holds that ideally the best form of government is representative government, and it should be adopted wherever there are no serious practical difficulties. But along with John Stuart Mill, he contends that there are serious practical difficulties in the way of establishing representative government in India. The masses are not educated, there is no spring of spontaneous improvement in the people themselves, and there is the lack of solidarity amongst the different classes. So he concludes that despotism is more suited to the condition of India than representative government. But while Mill pleaded for the despotism of a

¹ Cf. Mill: "It is not certain that the despotism of twenty millions (of English people) is necessarily better than that of a few, or of one."—Representative Government, Ch. XVIII.

trading corporation for India, Nabagopal wanted an Indian despot.¹

Nabagopal did not subscribe to the Spencerian ideal of Individualism. He was not satisfied with the mere negative functions of government, which only prevents the spoliation of life and property of the subjects ; like Aristotle he held the promotion of moral life of the citizens to be the chief function of the government. “ The first duty of government is the establishment of order but that accomplished, there remain other duties to be discharged. It is not sufficient that there is safety of life and limb, that men can toil and get riches without danger or hindrance.” The government must promote noble life.²

As there was very little chance of India's attaining the status of a national state and of electing a dictator in the near future, Nabagopal demanded that a “ beginning should be made, however small and infinitesimal towards real and tangible self-government.” He suggested two means for improving the machinery of government

¹ *Ibid*, May 21, 1873. It is interesting to note that at the present day, though there is an almost universal demand for democracy and much talk about socialistic republicanism in India, yet the Congressites are electing Dictators for all kinds of organisations.

² *Ibid*, May 21, 1873.

of India. First, that some Indian representatives should be included in the British Parliament. He cited the example of the French National Assembly, which in 1872 included representatives from the French colonies and dependencies. It might be objected that the population of India is so vast that its representatives might swamp the British Parliament. He answered that objection in the following manner : “ We can only point out that the masses have not as yet acquired the intelligence necessary for self-government. The electoral franchise might be limited in the first instance to the largest towns and be gradually extended to the rural population.” The possession of wealth or education or both might be made the basis of electoral franchise.¹ The beginning of self-government should also be made, according to him, in the municipalities. He held that the system of election should be introduced in the Calcutta Municipality, as the Justices did not represent anybody but themselves. “ The elective franchise should be unreserved ; the inhabitants of Calcutta are capable of using that franchise to their advantage and they ought to have it. Election ought to be periodical so as to allow the people and their representatives the opportunities of consulting one another’s feeling and views. The Government

¹ *Ibid*, December 4, 1872.

ought to return some members on its behalf and the rate-payers the rest.”¹

Nabagopal opposed along with the members of the British Indian Association the policy of educating the masses. As an abstract principle, he admitted that the duty of educating the masses and thereby bettering their condition is one of the highest importance to Government. But he held that in consideration of the economic condition of the country, the imparting of elementary education to the masses at the sacrifice of the interests of higher education, will be highly inexpedient. Such an education would create in the peasantry a distaste for agriculture. Moreover, “it will open their eyes to their miserable condition without giving them any means to better their condition.” So he advised the Government first to remove the poverty of the masses and then to bestow education on them. While thus asking the Government alone to shoulder the responsibility of improving the economic condition of the peasants, Nabagopal with a total disregard for consistency asked his countrymen not to depend too much upon Government. “The greatest lesson now to be taught is self-reliance. Let the people learn this and the path of every reformation will be clear. The only task then left to the Government

¹ *Ibid*, June 26, 1872. This view was accepted by the Government in 1875.

would be to encourage every attempt at reform ; the initiation of every good movement being left to the people themselves—the movement for giving popular education not excepted.”¹ The sum and substance of this sermon seems to be that the Government should not divert a farthing from the sum, devoted to the promotion of education of the middle classes, to elementary education, that the masses should try to educate themselves as best they can, but at the same time the Government alone ought to undertake the impossible task of removing the poverty of an ignorant peasantry.

Indianisation of services has been the cry of the educated Indians since the time of Raja Ram-mohun Roy : Nabagopal also joined the chorus in demanding the appointment of Indians to high posts. He held that it would not be safe on political grounds to exclude the most talented and meritorious men from Government service. These capable and highly intelligent men, being excluded from higher posts, might create disaffection towards the Government. But at the same time Nabagopal, with outrageous frankness, blurted out that “to speak the truth, we think the bulk of the people would much rather be governed by a Thomas Brown, with all his haughtiness and impetuosity at times leading to violence, than by the highly

¹ *Ibid*, June 5, 1872.

educated, mild and affable Native Christian, or by the most placid non-conformist Hindoo, or even by the most honest and upright, most anglicised Hindoo.'''

III. *Akshaychandra Sircar* (1846-1917.)

Akshaychandra Sircar is now remembered in Bengal as a great literary critic. He was a friend and disciple of Bankimchandra and his political opinions were much influenced by the writings of the latter. Like Bankimchandra he too held that the current political agitation was nothing but begging and crying.² From Bankimchandra he seems to have learnt that society is much more important for the development of individual character than government. But while Bankimchandra was actuated by the motive of establishing a national state with the help of the aggregate politico-religious forces of the community, Akshaychandra appears chiefly in the rôle of a constitutional legalist.

The seventh decade of the nineteenth century witnessed the growth of an intensely critical attitude towards the Government in India. While his contemporaries were racking their brains to find fault with the Government, Akshaychandra

¹ *Ibid*, July 31, 1872.

² *Sadharani*, 30th Agrabayan, 1280 B. S.

devoted his attention to a philosophical examination of the basis of the demands of political agitators. He saw the necessity of drawing the attention of his countrymen to the reality of political situation. He was of opinion that the training which was necessary for achieving self-government has been lacking in India ; and so long as the community is not actually prepared for assuming responsibility of government, we should utilise the facilities afforded by the British administration and must not provoke unnecessary hostility of the Government by harsh criticism. He pointed out the liberal character of the British Indian Government by drawing a comparison between it and the French Government at Chandernagore. There was no printing press, no newspaper and not even a school at Chandernagore. The French Government had sanctioned the establishment of a public library only on the condition that no debate would be held there. In British India, on the other hand, there was perfect liberty of expressing one's views and opinions. ¹

Akshaychandra was a lawyer and he applied his legal acumen to an examination of the bases of Indian political agitation. He found that there were four different schools of political thought amongst the agitators in India. The first school held the Permanent Settlement to be sacrosanct in

¹ *Ibid*, 26th July, 1874.

character and appealed to it whenever the Government attempted to impose any new tax on income from land. The second school made the Education Despatch of 1854 and the Queen's Proclamation to be the basis of their demand for higher education and absolute equality in the eye of law. The third school held that as India is a part and parcel of the British Empire, all the provisions of the English constitution should be applicable to India and the rights which have been secured by Englishmen by the constitutional struggle of seven hundred years are to be conceded to the Indian people. The fourth school held that the relation of the British Government to the Indian people is based on contract. According to them, the Bengali people headed by Raja Rajballav, Krishnachandra, Jagat Seth, Mirjafar and others handed over the Kingdom of Bengal to the English. So the rights which belonged to the subjects during the Muhammadan period must be maintained intact by the British Government. Akshaychandra pointed out the impracticability of all these claims in securing the rule of law for India. The basis of the rule of law is the parity of power between the government and the governed. Unless and until the people be powerful enough to command respect from the government there can be no constitutional government.¹

¹ *Ibid*, 30th Agrahayan, 1280 B.S.

He attached very little importance to the form of government. He maintained that the progress of a community does not depend on the form of government. Even if the very best constitution be adopted by the people of India, it will fail to make the indolent industrious and the extravagant frugal, and to eradicate the social vices.¹ The form of government is really the mirror of the progress of the community. If a form of government is not suited to the social conditions prevailing in a community, it cannot attain stability. If the form of government be far in advance of social progress, it will soon come down to the level of the condition of the community. It is useless, he maintains, to try to bring in social progress with the help of a particular form of government.²

There was much talk about the rights of subjects in the seventies of the last century. Akshay-chandra enunciated certain principles which should guide the people in demanding rights from the Government. There are three limits to the rights of subjects :—First, that the subjects have no right to demand anything which might prove detrimental to general welfare. No community can have any right to ask the King to abolish all laws and

¹ *Ibid*, 21st Baisakh, 1281 B.S.

² *Ibid*, 28th Baisakh, 1281 B.S. This view bears a close resemblance to Mill's theory as expressed in the first chapter of his "Representative Government."

law-courts and to pray for the right of having unrestrained power of oppressing one another. Secondly, the subjects cannot demand anything which might prove dangerous to the King. Kingship has been instituted for the preservation of society, if kingship itself be endangered who would protect the society? So we cannot demand the total abolition of the Indian Army, but we can demand the reduction of military expenditure. If the Government find it necessary to enact the Law of Sedition for its own preservation, subjects cannot object to it. But the subjects can discuss whether the law is really necessary for the preservation of the Government. Thirdly, the subjects can have no right to interfere in that which does not affect the interests of the subjects in any way. As for example, if the Queen likes to change the place of her residence, the subjects can have no right to object to it. Except these three things, the subjects have rights in every other sphere of activity ; and the Government is bound to concede these rights to the subjects.¹ Akshaychandra does not state whether the government or the subjects are to decide the harmfulness or otherwise of a measure. If the judgment of the government be taken as final, then the observance of these principles would mean the virtual denial of all the rights of the subjects. On the other hand, if the opinion of

¹ *Ibid*, 9th Agradhayan, 1280 B.S.

a group of subjects be accepted as the criterion of the utility or necessity of a measure, it would bring in confusion and ultimately lead to anarchy.

As a disciple of Bankimchandra, Akshaychandra holds that the government of a country can do very little in the way of effecting improvement in the condition of the citizens. This position is the logical outcome of the Individualist philosophy. He maintains that the science of politics is understood by those alone who have learnt to depend upon their own exertion for ameliorating their condition. When the Indian politicians were loudly protesting against the indifference of Government towards the development of Indian industries, Akshaychandra held that the people should try to improve their manufactures without looking up to government for help.¹

We have shown before how some of the popular writers on political questions took it for granted that all the elements of nationality were already present in India in the sixth and seventh decades of the nineteenth century. Akshaychandra subjected this notion to a critical examination. According to him there are four bonds of national unity—territory, religion, language and dress. Indian people live in a territory which is sufficiently demarcated from other countries by natural boundaries ; and the territorial integrity is maintained

¹ *Ibid.*, 5th December, 1875.

by the British Government and its army. In religion there is unity amidst apparent diversity. All the religious sects of India, excepting Islam, are but ramifications of one great moral principle. But the religion of the Muhammadans is a real stumbling block to the realisation of national unity in India. If uniformity of language and dress be criterions of national unity, India cannot claim to be a nation. So the sum and substance of Akshaychandra's disquisition on nationality is that many elements are lacking in the national unity of India.¹ In 1874 he could not detect the signs of that unity of interest and sentiment which has transformed the vast conglomeration of peoples of different races, languages, religions and dresses into a nation to-day.²

IV. Digambar Mitra

(1817-1877.)

Digambar Mitra, a student of the Hindu College, began his career as a poor schoolmaster and ended it as a Raja, honoured by the Government

¹ *Ibid*, 31st May, 1874.

² The Sahitya Parisat Library has got the files of the 'Sadharani' for 1280 and 1281 B.S. only. Sj. Ajarchandra Sircar, son of Akshaychandra has preserved a complete file of the 'Sadharani.'

and the people alike.¹ He became the Assistant Secretary of the British Indian Association in 1851 and gradually rose to the position of the President of the Association. Kristodas Pal, his life-long associate in the British Indian Association, wrote of him :—" While yet in his teens, he was thrown into the coterie of the illustrious Dwarkanath Tagore, which afterwards proved a nursery of the leading minds of Bengal..... He learnt politics at the feet of Dwarkanath Tagore, he was a personal friend and coadjutor of both Prasannakoomar and Ramanath Tagore.....His sympathies were republican and at the same time he did not care much for representative institutions in this country." ²

He was not only a shrewd politician and a successful man of business, but also a learned scholar. Anandakrishna Bose told Bholanath Chandra that as a student Digambar read, before the year 1838, Puffendorf's Law of Nations with

¹ See Bholanath Chandra's Life of Digambar Mitra, Vols, I and II.

The Presidency College Register notes the following about Digambar: Pupil of Derozio ; entered Hindu College, 1828. Began life as a teacher in the Nizamat School, Murshidabad. Manager to the Kassimbazar Raj, 1838. Zamindar. Assistant Secretary to the British Indian Association. Member, Legislative Council, 1864, 1870, 1877.

² *The Hindoo Patriot*, April 21, 1879.

Amritalal, the second son-in-law of Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur.¹

Like the disciples of Raja Rammohun, Digambar justly appreciated the great services rendered by the British Indian administration to India, and like them, too, he agitated soberly for the redress of grievances, which the people and specially the Zamindars felt. In 1853 it was he who penned the famous Memorial to Parliament on behalf of the British Indian Association. In it he said :—“As subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, the Natives of this country entertain the deepest sentiments of loyalty and fidelity to Her Majesty, and sincerely desire the permanence of the British supremacy in India, which has ensured to them freedom from foreign incursions and intensive dissensions, and security from spoliation by lawless power.” He expressed his gratefulness for the privileges conferred by the Charter Act of 1833, but at the same time he complained of several important omissions in the Charter Act. As this famous Memorial reveals to us the political aspirations of Bengal in 1853, and as a comparison between it and the Charter Act of 1833 would show how far Law was responsive to public opinion, we make some lengthy quotations from it. Digambar wrote :—“ But no provision was made (in 1833) for introducing those benefits which the

¹ Life of Digambar Mitra, Vol. I, p. 12.

circumstances of India notoriously required ; such as the relaxation of the pressure of the revenue system by lightening the land tax where it was variable, or erecting public works of utility, calculated to develop the resources of the country and promote the growth and increase of commerce and manufacture ; the improvement of the selection of qualified officers, the appointment of proper ministerial officers, the abolition of stamps in law proceedings, and other salutary measures ; the protection of life and property by the employment of a police adequate to the purpose in point of numbers and discipline, under the control of a proper number of experienced magistrates ;—relief from the gigantic monopolies which the East India Company maintained very inconsistently with their position as rulers ; the encouragement of the manufactures and commerce of the country, which had been greatly depressed in consequence of throwing open the trade with India ; the education of the people on an adequate scale, for which the grant of a lac of rupees authorised by Parliament in 1813 was manifestly insufficient ;.....and the admission of the natives to a participation in those rights, which are conceded by all constitutional governments, and which would qualify them to enjoy the benefit of free institutions at a future period.”¹

¹ The Memorial prayed for reforms in the following matters :—(1) The Home Government ; (2) The Government of India ; (3) Relations of the Governor-General with

Digambar believed like Raja Rammohun Roy that an aristocracy of wealth and intellect was most competent to carry on the administration of the country. So he pressed for reform in those directions, which would transfer power from a despotic government to an Indian aristocracy. He expressed his repugnance for autocracy in the following words :—“ It was over a century that India had enjoyed the blessings of a constitutional rule, and it would be a wonder, as it would be a disappointment to all right-thinking men, if she did not feel some repugnance to the exhibition of uncontrolled arbitrary power, and if she was still to be dazzled with the gold and pageant of an autocratic court. In fact it could with truth be said, that the idea of an all-powerful patriarchal rule, even if it were as benign in its influence as that of an Akbar, was as repulsive to her, as the doctrine that a king can do no wrong, was to an Englishman of the present day or the infallibility

Council ; (4) The Legislative Council ; (5) Laws made by the Executive ; (6) Plan of the Legislative Council ; (7) Powers of the Legislative Council and the Supreme Council ; (8) Control of Parliament ; (9) Declaration of non-interference with religion ; (10) Local Governors ; (11) Appeals from Governors ; (12) Economy of Public Service ; (13) Civil Service ; (14) Judicial System ; (15) Union of the Supreme and Sudder Courts ; (16) Courts in the interior ; (17) the Police and Magistracy ; (18) Monopolies ; (19) Revenue Officers ; (20) Education ; (21) Ecclesiastical Establishment.

of the Pope to a Protestant.”¹ Though he condemned autocracy, yet he was far from advocating democracy. He even went so far as to oppose the scheme of compulsory primary education, which alone can fit a nation for self-government. As a member of the Municipal Commission, he suggested in August 1861 that the six divisions of Calcutta should be represented by six men, of whom three should be chosen by the British Indian Association, and three by the Chamber of Commerce.² When a bill on Mofussil Municipalities was being discussed in the Bengal Legislative Council on January 20, 1872, Digambar opposed the introduction of Municipal Self-Government in a very limited form, on the ground that “the country was neither politically, socially, morally or intellectually prepared for their reception.” He further observed :—“Apart from other considerations, upon which he need not dwell, he would only observe that the very essence

¹ Quoted by Bholanath Chandra in his life of Digambar, Vol. I, pp. 224-25.

² Bholanath Chandra observes that Digambar’s principle of “selection of the members by certain fixed bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the British Indian Association was not so catholic as that subsequently contended for by the Indian League, who asked for a general right of Municipal election, and which was conferred on the corporation of Calcutta by Sir Richard Temple in 1875.—“Life of Digambar,” Vol. I, p. 126.

of such institutions, that from which they drew their vitality, and upon which their successful working was mainly dependent, was totally wanting here ; he meant public spirit, *viz.*, that enlightened idea of self-interest which prompted men under certain political conditions to subordinate individual to public good and to submit cheerfully to self-sacrifice, so that the well-being of the community might be promoted.”¹

As regards the functions of government, Digambar believed in the *laissez-faire* policy of the Manchester School. He opposed the proposal of the Government to abolish the customs of *Antarjali* and *Gangajatra* on the ground that social evils “should be removed by education and enlightenment, and not by the hand of law. He opposed the scheme of the Government to establish primary schools from the proceeds of an education tax, because he believed that the community itself ought to take the responsibility of educating the masses. He said in the Town Hall speech on the

¹ Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, 20th January, 1872, p. 29.

Maharaja Sir Jatindramohan Tagore, another stalwart of the British Indian Association, also opposed the Mofussil Municipality Bill and said :—“ He was not sure how far with rare exceptions, the population of Mofussil towns were fitted for elective municipalities.”—*Ibid.*, p. 26.

He supported the Vernacular Press Act in 1878. His effigy was burnt for voting for this Act. See *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 6, 1882.

2nd September, 1868 :—“ In season and out of season we are accused of always asking Government to do what we should do ourselves. What truth there may be in this charge, it is not worthwhile now to enquire. Certain it is that the best way to cure the evil is not to deprive the people of all power of action but to train them to act for themselves, to induce them to take an active and intelligent interest in their affairs, to teach them that they should rely upon themselves most, if they wish for the help of others.”¹

Digambar may be accused of a good deal of inconsistency in his utterances on the question of mass education. In 1872 he said in the Legislative Council :—“ There could be no question that every child had a right to receive an education suited to his condition in life, and if his parents were unable to give it to him, he had an undoubted claim upon the State for the same.” But in the same speech he expressed the view that it would be inexpedient to introduce mass education in this country. “ Mass education was no doubt desirable alike in the interests of good government and of humanity, but it was equally desirable that a sudden disruption should not take place in the existing social and industrial economy of the country, by its being quickened

¹ Quoted by Bholanath Chandra in his “ Life of Digambar.”

by a sort of hot-house treatment or pursued under a system of tuition which might inspire a distaste for the specially arduous life to which at least three-fourths of the population of the country were destined.”¹

His views on taxation showed the same anxiety for the interests of the Zamindars alone. He condemned the education cess but suggested an additional duty on salt, which he considered to be the least objectionable mode in which an additional revenue could be raised. “No tax could be productive in this country,” said he in the Legislative Council in the debate over the Cess Bill in 1871, “which did not reach the poor, because they constitute unfortunately ninety per cent. of the population.”

Digambar’s theory of Patriotism deserves to be quoted, as it shows his insight into this complex psychological feeling. He said in the Fawcett Memorial Meeting on the 26th November, 1872 :— “Patriotism is only developed clanship, and if properly analysed would appear to be another expression of self-love, although more intelligent and enlightened, which leads a man even to face the cannon’s mouth for the defence of his own home and hearth and for the glory of his country,

¹ Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, 20th January, 1872, pp. 32 ff.

with which his own well-being is indissolubly bound up.”¹

V. Kristodas Pal

(1838-1884.)

Kristodas Pal's life between 1861 and 1884 has been called, with some truth, the political history of Bengal for a quarter of a century. Sir Richard Temple said of him, “I found him next to Sir T. Madhava Rao, the best informed, and most intelligent Indian.” But Bholanath Chandra is somewhat severe in his criticism of Kristodas. He says that Kristodas Pal “taught his countrymen to run before they could stand alone. He made them forget their begging position, and set them on to extorting by agitation, much of which had the appearance of beggary on horse-back..... A man of the people by birth, he disappointed his nation by spending his energies in Zamindari harness.”²

Kristodas left college in 1857 at the age of 19, and spent the next four years in reading in the Calcutta Free Library where he stored up a huge mass of information, which became his greatest asset as a public man. In 1861 he became the editor

¹ “Life of Digambar,” Vol. II, p. 59.

² Bholanath Chandra's “Life of Digambar Mitra,” Vol. II, p. 11.

of the 'Hindoo Patriot,' and held that position till his death. In 1861 he became the Assistant Secretary of the British Indian Association, and subsequently in 1879 he became its Secretary. In 1863, he was appointed Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation and a Justice of the Peace. In 1872, he was nominated a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council. In 1877 the title of 'Rai Bahadur' was conferred upon him by the Government and in the following year, he was made a C.I.E. In 1883, he was elected by the British Indian Association for a seat in the Imperial Legislative Council, a privilege which was granted to it by Lord Ripon.

Kristodas Pal might be called the father of the policy of 'progressive realisation of self-government.' In a speech in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1875 he said : that if the people of India were in any way to be useful to themselves and the nation at large, they could only be so by associating themselves with their European fellow-subjects. "They must learn a good deal, and under the direction and guidance of their rulers might prove themselves equal to the task which they might be called upon to perform."¹ He set before himself and the nation the high ideal of colonial type of self-government. He said :—"The British government in this country was a progressive one,

¹ Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, 1875, p. 62.

and the institutions founded by it were essentially progressive in their nature ; and as the people were imbued with western knowledge and ideas, they longed for the western mode of government, and for the introduction of western institutions, for the protection of their liberties and the advancement of their welfare. It was, therefore, not unnatural that the people of Calcutta, who were admittedly in the van of intelligence and enlightenment should ask for that measure of self-government, which had been accorded to other countries, which owed allegiance to the British Crown—he meant the British Colonies and dependencies.”¹ But when he came back to the domain of practical politics, he opposed even the introduction of the elective system in the Calcutta Corporation. Moreover, like the other members of the British Indian Association of this period, he opposed in the columns of the *‘Hindoo Patriot’* the levying of the Education Cess and the Income tax, and suggested in their place the imposition of additional tax on salt.

We have said before that W. C. Bonnerjee delivered a speech at the East India Association in London, in 1867, demanding the introduction of representative government in India. Kristodas Pal in a letter to his friend, Shambhoochandra Mookerjee, made the following observations on

¹ *Ibid*, p. 50.

Mr. Banerjee's speech :—" Of course the time has not arrived for a representative system, but the importance of the educated natives should be recognised by extending the principles of self-government in the shape of a Delegate Assembly, nominated by Government." ¹

He maintains that the origin of the state is to be attributed to the necessity for protection. He shows his acquaintance with the different theories of origin of the state by referring to the patriarchal, contractual and 'representative theories.' His own theory may be termed as an admixture of the theories of force and contract. He says :—" In a state of nature, indeed, in every state, man defends himself to the utmost of his powers, from a natural instinct. In the pre-social period, however, these powers are obviously limited. Hence the origin of the state, that is, an organisation, be it represented by a king, hero, prophet or council of elders, strong in the obedience—the necessary obedience it may be, enforced by circumstances and by the anxieties consequent on the insecurity of savage life—of the community able to protect individuals where they fail of themselves. So paramount, so essential is this function of the state, that individuals consent

¹ The letter is dated 20th November, 1867. It has been published in the 'Bengal, Past and Present,' 1914, Sept.-Dec., p. 289.

to put up with the necessary evils of that institution.”¹

As regards the functions of government, Kristodas thinks that the primary duty of a government is to afford protection to the person and property of subjects.² He is of opinion that the Government is entitled to the loyalty of subjects, mainly because it performs this highly important function. He defines loyalty thus:—“It is allegiance to the ruling power for protection received. That power would have no right to the allegiance of its subjects, if it did not fulfil its duties, if it did not offer protection to their person or property, from external aggression or internal commotion, from the attacks of the unruly and the machinations of the wicked, if it did not give fair play to the springs of industry and allow the people subject to its sway freedom to pursue their callings in peace and security. If it did not make the weal of the community, whose trusted guardian it is, the object of its labours, what right would it have to claim this allegiance? So loyalty is, in mercantile parlance, an exchangeable commodity. It is an exchange for value received. It is necessarily calculating, and cannot be otherwise under any form of government. It is because the

¹ “The Hindoo Patriot,” February 12, 1872.

² *Ibid.*

British Government is a blessing to the country, that the people are attached and loyal to it.”¹

He made a bold stand against the repeal of the duties on cotton goods on financial grounds. When he found his efforts to be of no avail, he wrote in the *Hindoo Patriot* :—“ The constitution of the Indian Government gives the people no voice in its administration. The will of the autocrat of India is the law for the time. He ordains that the thing shall be done and it is done.” Like Raja Rammohun Roy, Kristodas too had a very high regard for the sense of justice of the British people. He wrote in conclusion of the article referred to above :—“ But however despotic the visible ruler may be, the invisible genius which protects Britannia, wherever her flag waves, is present in all his beneficence in India, and that genius is never deaf to the *vox populi*.”²

¹ Quoted from “ The Hindoo Patriot ” by Principal Herambachandra Maitra in his speech at Kristodas Pal Anniversary meeting, on the 24th July, 1919. The Kristodas Pal Anniversary, 1914-21, pp. 59-60.

² “ The Hindu Patriot,” 1879; quoted in the Kristodas Pal Anniversary, 1914-21, pp. 139-40.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL THOUGHT OF SISIRKUMAR GHOSH (1840-1911.)

I. Introductory.

“The Amrita Bazar Patrika,” in which all the political ideas of Sisir Kumar Ghosh were published, began to appear from Palua Magura, a little village in the Saddar Subdivision of the district of Jessore from the year 1868.¹ The files of the first two years of the *Patrika* seem to have disappeared from the face of the earth ; from the third year (1870), however, the old files have been preserved in the office of the *Patrika*. From the perusal of these files it appears that Sisir-kumar was the most virulent and uncompromising critic of the British Indian administration in the period between 1870 and 1885, the year of the origin of the Congress. Attacks and criticisms have been levelled against the British Indian administration since the very introduction of English education in a systematic fashion in this

¹ Sj. Mrinalkanti Ghosh (born in 1860), son of Hemantakumar, the second elder brother of Sisir Kumar Ghosh, gives the origin of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in an article in the “Panchapushpa,” Aswin, 1337 B.S.

country. But what characterises the criticism of Sisirkumar from that of the earlier generations and of his contemporaries is the spirit of intense suspicion towards the Government.¹ As early as 1872 the 'Englishman,' the 'Pioneer' and the 'Observer' accused the *Patrika* of preaching sedition.² Sisirkumar did not belong either to the landed or to the official nobility, nor did he try to acquire self-importance by attaching himself to the Rajas and Zamindars. So in those days of aristocratic domination, he was not recognised publicly as the leader of any school of political thought but hundreds of educated youngmen came under the spell of Sisirkumar's writings and acknowledged him in their heart of hearts as their true leader. It is significant that Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the first extremist leader of the post-Congress era, saluted Sisirkumar as his political 'Guru.'³ Sisirkumar is the first exponent of the Extremist school

¹ The following quotation illustrates the new spirit of suspicion which characterised the political views of a certain class of educated people in the seventies of the last century: "The people and Government here are two distinct bodies, their interests clash, their aims and scope differ and the result is a continual struggle between them for prerogatives and privileges. The difference of their position is, indeed, so wide that our Government cannot further the interests of the people without injuring its own interests directly or indirectly."—A. B. *Patrika*, 1st January, 1874.

² *Ibid*, 'Vernacular Journalism,' June 13, 1872.

³ Sisirkumar Ghosh by S. J. Anathnath Bose: Appendix.

of Indian politicians not only because of his attitude towards Government but also because of his bold scheme of popular political organisation in this country.

Economic, cultural, political and international causes were at work to give rise to the Extremist school in Bengal in the early seventies of the nineteenth century. Comparatively a large number of Bengali youths had by that time received English education, which has been the greatest liberalising force in India. They had learnt the history of Greece, Rome, England and France most diligently and the spirit of democratic government which they imbibed from their studies impelled them to agitate for something resembling self-government. In earlier generations those who had received English education were either absorbed in Government service or in lucrative Baniaships or in the learned professions. But from the seventies the supply of educated men for these services and professions began to be greater than the demand and the consequence was that the grim spectre of unemployment began to haunt the minds of the Bengali youths.¹ The education

¹ See Sambhoochandra Mookerjee's article, "Where shall the Baboo go?" in the *Mookerjee's Magazine*, 1874. The writer travelled extensively in Upper India and was employed as a sub-editor in Lucknow for some time and he seems to have written from his personal experience the following: "The British officers in the

which they had received enabled them to take an enlightened interest in the government of their country and they saw that all the high posts were reserved for Englishmen. The country had advanced culturally, but economic progress had not kept pace with cultural progress. The Bengali youths had no avenue of employment in trade and industries. So they were extremely discontented with their lot and with the habitual dependence of the Indian people on government began to throw the entire blame on the government for all the evils from which they suffered. The cost of administration began to mount up rapidly after the transference of political power from the Company to the Crown. To meet the increasing expenditure fresh demands were made on the people in the shape of various new taxes. When the people were thus being taxed, the severe famine of 1865-66 overtook Orissa and a part of Western Bengal.

Punjab, Oudh, the N.W. Provinces, the Central Provinces, Rajputana and Central India would not within the last ten years, unless sorely pressed for hands, receive a Bengali's application for any situation," *Mookerjee's Magazine*, p. 82, 1874. "In August 1869 an advertisement appeared in the *Moniteur*, the official publication of the N. W. Provinces, inviting candidates for the post of Translator and Head Clerk to a District Judge's Court, on a pay of Rs. 120 per mensem which ends thus:—"Bengali Baboos and youths fresh from college need not apply,"—*Ibid*, p. 83.

“ Food reached eight and ten times and in particular places thirty or thirty-five times the ordinary price, and was not procurable for money in many places.”¹ As the economic condition of the people, and especially of the middle classes, began to grow from bad to worse, political sentiment too began to veer round extremism.

Moreover, the educated middle class grew impatient at the slow rate of political progress of the country. They thought that time had come to entrust them with certain responsibilities of administration ; but the Government thought that the condition of the country did not warrant them in making any change in their policy. So a clash of opinions and feelings became inevitable. Sisirkumar gave voice to the prevailing sentiment of the middle classes in the following words : “ The policy adopted by the British nation towards India was something like a semblance of the Roman policy. The principle of government by popular assistance is a part and parcel of the English national mind. They could not get rid of it except by surrendering their own character. This would be committing suicide. Accordingly, the appearance of some of the popular institutions was introduced in India. The Jury system was introduced in a few solitary districts and it was promised to the rest. One-third of the

¹ A. B. Patrika, “ Famine,” October 30, 1873.

Judgeships of High Courts was declared open to the natives of the country. Municipal self-government was promised unreservedly and semblances of it were introduced generally. Natives of the country were made eligible to the Legislative Councils and solitary native gentlemen have been appointed to the seats therein. Now these acts of British Government pleased the people a great deal. But it pleased them more as holding out hopes rather than as any substantial blessings." Then he points out how the fulfilment of these hopes has been deferred and has consequently given rise to discontent.¹

Last, though not the least of all, the world movements were rousing high hopes in the mind of the Bengali youths. The partial unification and the establishment of constitutional government in Italy under the house of Savoy,² the liberation of slaves and the foundation of the Negro state of Liberia as the result of

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, 26th September, 1878.

² Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan in an article showing the necessity of sending some representatives to the British Parliament observes that at present public opinion is being consulted in France (Napoleon III gave the right of discussing the budget to the French Legislative Assembly in 1862). Italy has adopted constitutional government and the Czar is contemplating its introduction in Russia. *Shomprakash*, 31st Ashadh, 1269 B. S. (1862).

the American Civil War,¹ the liberal policy of Alexander II in Russia and the triumph of nationalism in Germany and Italy were all watched with deep interest by the educated classes in Bengal and they hoped that they would secure for themselves the benefits which the western world has obtained.

The operation of these new forces made the appearance of extremist political thought almost inevitable. Sisirkumar Ghosh made himself the mouthpiece of this new school of political thought. He was able to captivate the mind of a large section of the educated people of Bengal by making the *Patrika* an organ of the middle classes, by his broad sympathy, brilliant humour, and above all, by his bold attacks on the Government.²

¹ Sisirkumar wrote: "That certain races are to be slaves only, is a dogma which has been practically refuted in the case of the Negroes of Liberia and however low and degraded we may be, we are certainly not lower than the Negroes."—*A. B. Patrika*, 1st September, 1870.

² Bipinchandra Pal in his 'Indian Nationalism—Principles and Personalities' (Madras, 1918) writes: "The '*Patrika*' came to special prominence under the Lieutenant-governorship of Sir George Campbell (1870-73), whose attempt to restrict higher education with the avowed object of diverting the public funds thus set free, to the diffusion of primary education, aroused a good deal of opposition from the educated classes. And in their criticism of Campbell's acts and policy, Babu

Sisirkumar Ghosh was not, however, a mere political agitator. His writings reveal to us some bold political speculations, regarding the nature, form and functions of government and especially regarding the theory of punishment. This philosophical basis of his writings is all the more surprising because the whole of his literary output was meant for publication in his *Patrika*, which he served as the editor, composer, printer, despatcher and even as the maker of types and ink with which it was printed. He had no opportunity of receiving high University education. He was a self-taught and self-made man. The spirit of philosophical enquiry, with which he was endowed from his very boyhood, later on blossomed forth in his "Amiya Nimai Charit," "Kalachand Gita," "Narottam Charit" and "Lord Gauranga," every one of which is a master-piece in recent Vaishnava Literature.

The inherent Vaishnava sentiment checked his extremist political views from breaking forth into violence. He had an instinctive horror for violent means. He advised the Irish people not

Sisirkumar Ghosh and his brothers adopted a tone of biting satire and undisguised abuse, which first shook people's nerves somewhat violently, and then, gradually, put a new courage and self-consciousness into them."—
Page 89.

to have recourse to violence.¹ He was a keen student of international politics, and especially of the movements in the British colonies. The constitutional movements in these countries made a strong appeal to his mind and he always urged upon his countrymen the necessity of making constitutional agitation.

II. Sisirkumar as an Exponent of Middle-class Democracy.

Sisirkumar Ghosh was one of the earliest and ablest exponents of the democratic form of government in India. We have shown before that Raja Rammohun Roy did not demand any representative legislature, because the necessary condition for the success of such a body was wanting in India in his time. Mr. George Norton, the Advocate-General of Madras, in his lectures in the Madras College Hall in 1833-34. showed indeed the necessity of having some kind of representative legislature, but at the same time expressed the view that time had not yet come for the establishment of such a body in India.² Thoughtful Indians

¹ A. B. Patrika, December 24, 1880.

² "It is only by some means of political representation that the common interests of the people of both these portions of the English Empire can be identified, and their union as fellow subjects be permanently fixed.

too seem to have realised that the number of men taking an enlightened interest in public affairs was so limited that it would be difficult to find proper constituencies for a representative legislature. The earliest demands "for a partially representative legislature" were made by the British Indian Association in 1852 and by Pearychand Mitra in 1853.¹ Then his opinion was echoed in *The Hindoo Patriot* in February 1857.² Then, in 1860, in a public meeting held at the Calcutta Town Hall and attended by "the Europeans and Natives, Hindus and Muhammadans, Jews and Christians," a resolution was passed demanding a Legislative Council, composed of unofficial as well as official members."³ But the Resolution did not specifically mention whether the non-official members were to be elected or nominated. We have shown before that Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan was the first to demand⁴ a full-fledged representative legislature. In 1867 Mr. W. C. Bonerjee, while studying in England, delivered a lecture on "Representative and Responsible Government of India." In course

These means are at present wanting to the people of India ; but it is no vain expectation that they will before long be supplied."—Norton's Rudiments (Madras, 1841), p. 266.

¹ "Notes on the Evidence on Indian Affairs" by Pearychand Mitra, 1853.

² The "Hindoo Patriot," February 12, 1857, p. 51.

³ The "Hindoo Patriot," December 26, 1860.

⁴ "Shomprakash," 14th Paush, 1270 B.S.

of this lecture he said : " My opinion is that there ought to be a representative Assembly, and a Senate sitting in India, with a power of veto to the Governor-General, but under the same restriction as exists in America, with perhaps an absolute power of veto to the Crown " ¹ The next demand came from Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee.² Most of these writers simply made the demand without discussing the reasons for which they demanded representative legislature. None of them could point out the means by which the demand might be made an effective one. It was reserved for Sisirkumar Ghosh to adduce philosophical reasons for making a demand for representative legislature and to point out the means by which such a demand could be made irresistible.

The basis of his claim for democracy was the contractual theory of the origin of government. He held that as the number of men increased in a community, there arose the necessity of having an arbitrator who would settle the disputes between different members of the community. So the power of deciding cases was vested in the hands of one, who came to be known as the chief or the Raja. "He was to protect the citizens, and to educate them, and in return every member of

¹ *Journal of the East India Association*, No. I of 1867, p. 176.

² The "Englishman," 1st June, 1870.

the society was to make a free gift to him. This gift became the first tax.¹

Sisirkumar believed democracy to be the best of all forms of Government. He argued that democracy gives better security to life and property than despotism, and said that the Czar of Russia was hated by the people, while the President of U.S.A. is loved by the citizens of America. He further pointed out that had France been a Republic, she would not have suffered defeat at the hands of Germany.²

From his study of the history of political development of India and Europe, he came to the conclusion that India has become fit for a democratic constitution. He says that there are three stages of political growth in every nation. He designates these stages as rudimentary, centralising and confederating. In the first or rudimentary stage, political life is confined to small areas. The form of government in this stage may be republican or monarchical. "Such were the monarchies of ancient India, Greece, Italy and England. Likewise there were small republics, such as those of the Townships of Hindoostan, Grecian Republics, etc."

The next stage is the growth of national state under despotism. "Then comes the centralising period, when the territorial units of political

¹ *A.B. Patrika*, 1871, pp. 322-23.

² *Ibid*, April 31, 1874, p. 90.

existence expand in size. Cities become united into provinces and provinces into kingdoms, scattered power concentrates, isolated territories are knit together, tribes are merged into nations, physical prosperity promoted to a high degree, property made more secure, commerce thriving, intellect highly developed, wonderful works of arts constructed and a distinct national pride formed. In this stage, in short, the sinews of the nation are strengthened, and an impulse given to its genius. In England the reign of Elizabeth was the culminating point of this stage, in France, the reign of Louis XIV.

The third stage, designated by Sisirkumar as the confederating stage, is not, as the name would suggest, a period of confederation of nations, but of confederation of political authorities, *i. e.*, in plain words, a democracy. He does not think the early republics of Greece, Rome and India to be the best agencies for the development of a good life, as the sphere of social life in these states was restricted to small areas. He finds fault with the second stage too, because in it unity is realised only in the person of the sovereign. But this stage is the necessary prelude to democracy. "The possession of material and intellectual prosperity in the second stage gives an impetus to the innate dignity of man. Accordingly, citizens aspire to share the sovereign power in the best way they can. A blow is aimed at monarchical government and a

comparatively strong current begins to run counter to its influence.”

The transition from despotism to democracy is made, according to him, by serious collision between the monarch and the subjects, as is evidenced from the history of England in the seventeenth and that of France in the eighteenth century.

Having established the general principle of political growth, Sisirkumar applies it to the case of India. He says that India has been under the centralising process of government under the British. This process has been of such great value to Indians that “while independent Asian states such as China and Persia are yet groping in the dark, the Hindoos residing in Asia, enjoy all the advantages of civilised European states and this they owe to their conquerors.” But as the logic of history shows, India cannot remain satisfied with it. She must desire the adoption of liberal principles in government. Sisirkumar concludes this essay by observing that “it is not from any feeling of disloyalty that the Native Press loudly cry for redress from English people, it is the immediate sequence of their system of government.”¹

We might not agree with his views regarding the ancient Greek and Roman republics ; but it must be admitted that this evolutionary study of

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, October 7, 1875.

the development of polity on a comparative basis is a remarkable one. Such a study was not made even in England before 1885-86, when Prof. Sidgwick first began to lecture on this subject to the students of Cambridge.¹ This essay also shows that the Indian students of European history were applying the principles of historical and constitutional development of Europe to the condition of their own country.

Sisirkumar demanded a Parliament for India as early as 1870.² He was conscious of the fact that the demand might seem to be a premature one ; but he replied that “ we have great faith in the destiny of a nation, which has outlived the Moslem oppression and Anglo-Saxon contact.” He further adds that “ Fathers plant trees and children enjoy the fruits ; we may not see a Parliament in India but our children may, and we can die with some consolation, if we can die with this belief.”

He based his demand for Parliament, first on the trend of the history of colonies within the British empire. He says that if Canada and Australia were securing autonomy, why should

¹ Editor's preface to the “ Development of European Polity ” by Henry Sidgwick, pp. vi-vii.

² In *A. B. Patrika*, articles on ‘ Parliament in India ’ were published on the 1st and 8th September, 1870, and on 10th November, 1870.

India lag behind ? Secondly, he claims self-government as the inherent right of man. "We as human beings have all the aspirations and privileges of human beings and we do not know how England can reasonably refuse our demand."¹ Thirdly, he shows that India has got all the characteristics of a nation. "As a nation we live, and unlike the Jews, in our own country, with a language, literature, genius, philosophy and a religion of our own." Such an appeal to the cultural basis of political unity and political power has been a potent factor in the establishment of nation-states in modern Greece and Italy. In the seventies of the last century the religious prophets, like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Dayananda, did much more than the Orientalists to make the people of India proud of their own culture. Fourthly, Sisirkumar appealed to the basic principle of the English constitution and says, "Nothing short of a representative form of government in some shape ought to be demanded, for those who are taxed should at least be permitted to choose the mode in which the

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, 1st September, 1870. Political philosophers might prove the fallacy of natural rights ; but every nation in its struggle for securing the right of self-determination appeals to the natural rights. The argument raised here by Sisirkumar is echoed by the nationalists in India to-day in the shibboleth, "Freedom is our birthright."

assessment ought to be made.”¹ He was severe in condemnation of the then existing Legislative Councils, as they did not represent the people in any way.

Another reason for demanding a representative Parliament was that the British Parliament was so burdened with other affairs that Indian interest was neglected by it. “If we demand a Parliament of our own from the English people, it is to lighten their trouble.”²

In an article entitled “Legislation by foreigners” he showed still another reason for establishing a representative Legislature in India. He contended in this article that foreigners could never make good laws in an ancient and civilised country like India. By elaborate statistics he proved that the English themselves detected the flaws in laws they had made for India and frequently repealed them. This has happened because the English people could not understand the spirit of the civilisation of India. “India has a civilisation of its own. It is a distinct country from England and its people have distinctive features, acquired by an exclusive civilisation of thousands of years. It is not for a foreigner to come and at once unravel the Gordian knot. It is not for a foreigner to come and analyse the manners,

¹ *Ibid*, 1870, pp. 350-51.

² *Ibid*, 1st September, 1870.

customs, civilisation and genius of such an intelligent and exclusive race which India is peopled with.”¹

Raja Rammohun Roy had shown in 1830-32 that if a large body of cultured Englishmen could be induced to settle in India, the political progress of the country would be accelerated. After the lapse of nearly forty years Sisirkumar too echoes the sentiment. “If we had a large body of European residents here, we might have, perhaps, by this time had a Parliament.”² A large body of Anglo-Indian population had grown up in India since the death of the Raja; a large number of European merchants had been living in India at the time of Sisirkumar. He appealed to these Anglo-Indians and Europeans to make common cause with the Indians on the ground that “constitutionally the Anglo-Indians are as much slaves as we are.” “It is a poor satisfaction, no doubt, to the Europeans that they are better off than the natives when they are themselves worse off than the rest of the human race, than their own brothers and relations in England.”³

In this connection it is to be noticed that in those early days of Indian nationalist agitation, Sisirkumar’s clear vision foresaw the danger to the

¹ *Ibid*, 6th July, 1876.

² *Ibid*, 8th September, 1870.

³ *Ibid*, 10th November, 1870.

democratic movement in India from the claim of special privileges of the Mussalmans. He wrote "Those Mussalmans who are for special privileges must not forget the interests of India. India first and then other considerations. The spectacle of Hindus and Mussalmans quarrelling over the texts of the Puran or the Koran is not at all a serious affair.....But it is altogether a serious affair, when the unthinking Mussalmans cry for special privileges the effect of which can do no good to themselves, but would be very weakening to the country." ¹

A proposal for the inclusion of several members from India in the British Parliament had been going on since the time of Joseph Hume (1831). The East India Association had been making agitation for it since the sixties of the last century. Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan also advised the Bengali people to join the Bombayites with a view to making a similar demand. ² But Sisirkumar opposed this scheme on three grounds. First, "We are for Home Rule, and we cannot sympathise with those who are for representatives sent from here." ³ Secondly, suitable representatives

¹ *Ibid*, October 26, 1882.

² "Shomeprakash," 31st Ashadh, 1269 B.S.

³ *A. B. Patrika*, January 9, 1880. The Home Rule League in Ireland was founded in 1871. Charles Stewart Parnell became the real leader of the Home Rule party in 1878. The Irish demand had had its repercussion in India

could not be found, and even if found, it would be difficult to get him elected by any English constituency. Thirdly, even if India gets the right of sending her own representatives from India, the Indian members would be in such a hopeless minority that they would not be able to secure any tangible benefit for India. "If India could be adequately represented that would have been a very good thing perhaps, but it is infinite times better to remain unrepresented than to be inadequately represented like Ireland." ¹

Sisirkumar knew, what the members of the British Indian Association and the political agitators did not clearly realise, that an isolated opinion expressed in a pamphlet or a newspaper article or even a resolution of the council in favour of India would not make the Government listen to the proposal. Public opinion, not only in the large towns, but also in the district and sub-divisional towns must be created by a comprehensive political organisation first of all; and then through persistent agitation by the politically united people the desired goal might be reached.² "Knock, knock and it shall be opened unto you" was his oft-repeated formula for political agitation.

as early as 1880 as is seen above. Mrs. Annie Besant is not thus the first person to demand Home Rule for India.

¹ *Ibid*, October 7, 1875.

² *Ibid*, 'A Parliament in India,' 10th November, 1870 and 'Voluntary Assessors to the Legislation of India,' 26th September, 1878.

In 1870 Sisirkumar's plan was to transform the aristocratic "British Indian Association" into a democratic body, which should include not only the representatives of the districts in Bengal, but also those of the Anglo-Indians and of the people of "Bombay, Madras, Oudh, the Punjab and the N. W. Provinces."¹ Attempts were made to induce the "British Indian Association" to lower its annual subscription from Rs. 50 to Rs. 5. But all such attempts failed. From the editorial reply to a correspondent's question, we learn that Sisirkumar advised the districts in December 1870, to set up independent associations for discussing questions of public importance. Sisirkumar hoped at that time that if district associations be established, the British Indian Association would be compelled to assume a more popular character.²

In 1872 the Ghosh brothers made strenuous efforts to organise the district political associations

¹ *Ibid*, 10th November, 1870.

² *Ibid*, 15th December, 1870. The correspondent from Dacca suggested: "If another association (other than the British Indian Association) had been formed at Calcutta, with men of respectability at its head, such as Vidyasagar or so, as it was once proposed, its branches could be established at different places. In the absence of such a central body at Calcutta, the difficulties of having political organisation in the Muffusil, are greatly increased." This suggestion materialised in the formation of the Indian League in 1875.

all over Bengal. While Sisirkumar exhorted the middle-class people to organise themselves politically, his elder brother, Hemantakumar, travelled from district to district giving the lead in the matter of political organisation. We learn from the *Patrika* that the Dacca People's Association (2nd Falgun, 1278 B.S., March 1872), the Burdwan Association (consisting of 70 independent men, Doctors, Pleaders and Zamindars), the Murshidabad, Santipur and Ranaghat Associations were formed during the year 1872.¹ How far the efforts of the Ghosh brothers were crowned with success is known from the *Patrika* of the 17th May, 1877, which gives an account of district associations at Krishnagar, Berhampore, Jessore, Khulna, Rajshahi, Dacca, Burdwan, Hooghly, Barisal and Mymensingh. But Sisirkumar did not rest contented with these alone. In an article entitled "Voluntary Assessors to the Legislation of India," published on the 26th of September, 1878, he

¹ *Ibid*, 1872, p. 18, 27 and 38.

"After Dacca comes Burdwan, and whose turn next it shall be? We believe Berhampore." P. 27, 1872.

"We believe that two more associations of the same nature besides that of Berhampore will be established; one at Santipur, another at Ranaghat, within the course of the next week." p. 38.

Had not the Ghosh brothers taken a leading part in organising the district associations, it would not have been possible for them to write in this way in the *Patrika*.

wrote ; “The necessity, therefore, generally arises of district associations being formed to explain the Government to the people and people to the Government. There are some associations of this sort already in existence. They are doing work more or less. But what is wanted is that every district should have such an association. These associations should make it their incumbent duty to represent local views to the Government on every occasion of intended legislation.”

Sisirkumar had given other reasons also showing the necessity of popular political organisation six years earlier. He wrote in 1872 : “Political training is necessary to cope with trained politicians, and unfortunately none of us ever has had any training of that sort. The English nation is eminently a political nation, and to grapple with them we must needs know something of politics ourselves.....Since we should not fight with gunpowder and shot, we must try all legitimate means in our power to maintain our privileges. A political training and unity of interests are all that is necessary to give an impassable front to the ever-encroaching Government of ours.¹

Sisirkumar was a youngman of twenty, when the Indigo Disturbance broke out in western Bengal. His nephew Mrinal Babu tells me that Sisirkumar

¹ *Ibid*, 1872, p. 38.

took a leading part along with Babu Vishnucharan Biswas and Digambar Biswas of Chaugacha (Jessore) in organising the Ryots against the Indigo planters.¹ His name, however, is not mentioned in the Report of the Indigo Commission. The tenour of Sisirkumar's writing leads one to believe that he had some part in organising the peasants at that time.² Whatever might be his own part in the Indigo Disturbance, he was never tired of talking of it proudly. In his attempt to prove the efficacy of popular organisation he always held up the example of the success attained by the passive resistance of the peasants in 1860. He even went so far as to exhort the

¹ On the basis of the information supplied by Matilal Ghosh, S.J. Anathnath Bose in his 'Biography of Sisirkumar Ghosh' writes that Sisirkumar was called "Sinni Baba" the "God-sent Father" by the peasants and that he contributed a series of articles under a pseudonym in the *Hindoo Patriot* on the grievances of the cultivators of indigo.

² "The rulers of the Empire know not the origin of this great combination. It is yet a mystery to them as to how a combination of the apathetic Bengali Ryots, a combination in which about five millions of men took part was brought about so secretly and so suddenly. We shall disclose the secret to-day for the benefit of the rulers of the land who are quite satisfied with themselves, when 'the public feeling is in a quiescent state.' We feel now no hesitation in disclosing the secret, because the noble heroes of our story are both dead."—*A. B. Patrika*, September 3, 1880.

Irish people to follow the model of the Bengal peasants. "It is by passive resistance alone, they can bring the landlords to their terms."¹ From this it is not unreasonable to conclude that the idea of organising popular opinion with a view to offer passive resistance to the Government was lurking in his mind.

Most of the district associations had been organised by the year 1875. But Sisirkumar found the "British Indian Association" obdurate in its refusal to admit the middle class people by lowering its rate of subscription. So he organised the "Indian League" in September, 1875. The annual subscription for members of the League was fixed at Rupees five. On the occasion of its foundation Sisirkumar wrote: "This is the first instance of a political body formed by public announcement and a call upon the nation to attend it and mould it to their liking."² Though Sisirkumar was the heart and soul of the League, yet he was so very modest and unassuming in character that he did not become the secretary of the League; he was contented with the humble designation of assistant secretary.³ He was able to

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, 24th Dec., 1880.

² *Ibid*, September 30, 1875.

³ Kristodas Pal was the Assistant Secretary of the British Indian Association, though he was in reality the guiding spirit of that body. This example might have influenced Sisirkumar to assume the office of the Assistant Secretary.

induce almost all the leading men of Calcutta including Surendranath Banerjea, Durgamohan Das, Anandamohan Bose, Narendranath Sen and Nabagopal Mitra to join the League. But owing to the highhandedness of its president, Sambhoocharan Mukherjee, and quarrel among its members, the League ceased to be an efficient body soon after its foundation.

Sisirkumar's interest in political organisation was not confined to Bengal alone. He had an all-India outlook. Along with his friend Kalicharan Banerjee, he went to Bombay to present an address to Sir Richard Temple. He induced his friend to deliver an address at Poona on 'National Unity.' In that address Mr. Banerjee exhorted the Maharashtra audience to make common cause with the Bengalis.¹ Sisir Kumar was not ashamed, indeed, of the part Bengal had played in rousing political consciousness in India,² but this visit to Poona broadened his political outlook and opened his eyes

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, November 27, 1877.

² In 1874 Sisirkumar quoted the following with evident pride from the leading Bombay paper "Native Opinion :—" "The formation of a regular native public opinion in India on the modern European principles may be said to have commenced when the last Charter was about to be granted to the East India Company. That opportunity was availed of both in Calcutta and Bombay to establish their leading political Associations and their leading journals. Owing to the comparatively greater progress of

to the excellent political work that the Mahratta people were doing. Soon after his return from Poona, he wrote an article in Bengali entitled "The Means of saving the Country" and in it he gave an account of the *Salisi* boards, which had been established in 14 or 15 places in the Poona district under the auspices of the Poona Sarva-janik Sabha. He urged the Bengali people to imitate this method of setting up arbitration courts, which were to run parallel to the regular courts of

English education in Bengal, the institutions founded there readily took root and the political questions of the day began there to be systematically and perseveringly discussed from a purely native point of view." (Quoted in the *Patrika*, 24th Dec., 1874.) In an article on 'Bengal and Bombay' published in the *Patrika* of the 7th October, 1875, Sisirkumar tries to find out the cause of the greater political progress in Bengal. He argues that the Permanent Settlement in Bengal has created a leisured class who can take an enlightened interest in politics. He thinks that Bombay is inferior to Bengal in political progress and writes "Its ablest papers, the *Native Opinion* and *Indu Prakash* vainly strive to rouse their countrymen to take some interest in politics." He points out the difference in political outlook between the two provinces: "The Bengalis want a Parliament in India, but the people of the Western Presidency, a representative of India in English Parliament."

In 1877 he visited Poona and on seeing the nature of political propaganda there, gave up the attitude of that self-conscious superiority, which still characterises the Bengali people.

justice and save the litigants from heavy expenses.¹ Again in an article, published on the 26th September, 1878, he asked the Bengali people to imitate the organisation of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, which "has succeeded in making itself the organ of the Mahratta community." It is to be noted here that while the "British Indian Association," "Indian League," and the "British Indian Society" failed to make themselves representative bodies in the proper sense of the term, the Mahratta people were able to establish such a comprehensive and representative institution as the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. Thus the beginning of the superiority of Bombay in political progress is to be traced from the seventies of the last century.

Sisirkumar wanted to organise public opinion not only in India but also in England and America. His idea of carrying on political propaganda in England was not to appeal to the governing classes there, but to the middle classes who "are of opinion that India should be justly governed for

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, 12th January, 1878.

The plans of setting up arbitration courts and of offering passive resistance were not, thus, offered to the country for the first time by Mahatma Gandhi. The *Salisi* boards failed to achieve any tangible success in the seventies of the last as well as in the twenties of the present century.

the benefit of Indians, if it is to be retained at all.”¹

His idea regarding the enlistment of sympathy for the Indian cause from America is remarkable. Such an idea, probably, did not come to the mind of any other man in Bengal in those early days of Indian national movement. In 1871 an American politician, named Mr. Seward, visited the Punjab and left the country with an impression, based on a District Magistrate's statement, that India was very lightly taxed. On that occasion Sisirkumar wrote: “We have thus lost a great chance of provoking adverse criticism regarding the Government of our country in America.....What we say is lost in the winds, we simply cry in the wilderness, but the remarks of a rival nation cannot be trifled with.....If there is a rivalry between nations regarding their wealth, power and intelligence, there is also a rivalry regarding their goodness, generosity and justice. Would England like to be taunted with oppression and injustice? Proud and haughty as the English people are, they would feel it most deeply. Would England like to be charged before the whole world that she is not as good to India as she should be?”²

¹ *Ibid*, Dec. 17, 1880. Article on “Babu Upendra-nath Das.”

² *Ibid*, June 15, 1871.

We have tried to show so far that Sisirkumar was in favour of organising the politically-minded people of Bengal into a compact and representative political association, and thereby compelling the Government to defer to the wishes of the middle classes. He was the first man in Bengal to protest against the exclusive privilege of the landed aristocracy of representing the people. He was equally against the method of entrusting a voice in public affairs to the Ryots. He was a staunch advocate of the middle-class democracy. The following quotation explains his reason for entrusting the middle class alone with political power : " They (the Zamindars) cannot properly represent the myriads of the people of Bengal..... The opinion prevails and we cannot gainsay it, that, as a rule, while eagerly grasping the power of rank and wealth, they (the Zamindars) are culpably neglectful of the duties and obligations which the possession of property imposes. With many bright exceptions, the majority are sunk in sensuality and sloth, mindful of their ease and comfort, and indifferent to the interests of those dependent on them. The masses compose the Ryotary class, but plunged in deep ignorance, unconscious of their own powers and unable to exercise them, wanting in the means whereby they can make themselves heard by Government, it is next to impossible that a representative man can be found amongst them. The gentry class is the

most important of all, but unfortunately the existence of such a class is not even so much as acknowledged by Government. They have, in fact, no legal existence in Bengal. Amongst all civilised countries the gentry or middle class carries the greatest influence in all matters, and so it is in Bengal. But Government purposely ignores the existence of this class.”¹

He maintained that there was such an antagonism of economic interests between the Zamindars and the Ryots that it was impossible for the former to represent the latter. The middle class alone, according to him, was capable of protecting and representing the interests of the Ryots. He would like to vest political power in the middle classes (meaning thereby the members of the professions such as doctors, pleaders, teachers, traders, etc., and probably the small estate-holders), but would urge them to promote the interests of the masses. “No association can ever secure lasting importance, or become truly national, which does not take up the interest of the masses against those of the few who oppress them.”² In the first stage of democracy the bourgeoisie made claims to represent the peasants and artisans everywhere in the world, just as in the earlier days the enlightened despots claimed to represent the nation as a whole. But

¹ *Ibid*, ‘The Representative Ryot,’ Sept. 11, 1873.

² *Ibid*, ‘Indian League,’ November 4, 1875.

the economic struggles between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has shown that the former cannot truly represent the interests of the latter. In India, too, we find numerous instances illustrating the truth of this general principle. Among others we may take the instance of Sisirkumar himself. He was generous and philanthropic, no doubt, but when any serious clash of interests arose between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, he invariably advocated the cause of the former. He did not like to give any portion of the money, so long utilised for promoting higher education of the classes, for promoting primary education of the masses.¹ He protested against the Factory Act of 1877, because it did not allow the

¹ *Ibid*, 'National Education,' Feb. 21, 1878. 'The best safety of government against insurrections now is that the masses are unable to look into the doings of the Government and educated natives intervene between the Government and them. But give the common people a little knowledge, however, small, and reduce the middle classes to their level by doing away with high education, then the common people will learn to chafe at the measures of taxation and turn the discontent against the Government which they now manifest against Mahajans and landlords. Certainly this consideration should not persuade the Government to withhold mass education. All we say is that the Government should at the same time go on advancing high education to interest the middle classes to its cause.'

capitalist employers to exact work for 16 hours a day from an operative.¹

III. *His Views on Local Self-government.*

As Sisirkumar was a staunch advocate of the democratic form of government, it is naturally to be expected that he would make a strong plea for the introduction of local self-government in Bengal. But it is curious to note that he opposed Sir George Campbell's idea of establishing rural municipalities in 1871.² The real reason for such an opposition was not that he was against the idea of self-government in the sphere of local administration but that he was highly suspicious of any scheme originating from the brain of Sir George Campbell. He thought that Sir George was trying to impose only new taxes without giving to the people the reality of self-government. "The more the municipalities multiply the more and more the Government will shift its own legitimate burden upon the shoulders of the people."³

¹ *Ibid*, 'Factory Act in India,' Sept. 2, 1875. "A larger death rate amongst our operatives is far more preferable to the collapse of this rising industry." "We can, after the manufactures are fully established, seek to protect the operatives."

² *A. B. Patrika*, 1871, p. 325.

³ *Ibid*, 1872, p. 20. In January 1872, the Bengal Government proposed to entrust the police and primary education to the municipalities.

That he was not against the very idea of local self-government in 1871-72 is proved by the following quotation from his writings: "Make these councils elective, let even the Chairman be elected by the rate-payers and we believe people will not grudge the imposition of fresh taxation. If Mr. Campbell is sincerely desirous of granting a great boon to the people of Bengal, he can have no objection to make such changes in the body of the bill as would meet the requirements of the people. There can be no political danger in giving power over such minor matters as education, sanitation, etc., to the people, and we hope Mr. Campbell will thus secure the blessing of the forty millions entrusted to his care." ¹

He advocated the immediate introduction of local self-government for three reasons. First, that the management of local administration will give experience to the people in managing their own affairs. "Let the people have their own commissioners, let the people spend their own money, squander away if they choose, and nobody except themselves will be losers by their folly. Experience will at last teach them how to husband their resources, and experience is the best of teachers." ² There is a general impression

¹ *Ibid*, 'The Bengal Municipal Bill,' January 11, 1872.

² *Ibid*, Magh 20, 1278 B. S., 1872 A. D.

amongst students of history that Lord Ripon was the first man to introduce local self-government "as a measure of political and popular education." But as a matter of fact, Sisirkumar used this very argument for the introduction of local self-government eight years before Lord Ripon did use it. Sisirkumar wrote in 1875: "It may form the nucleus of political freedom of the nation. We have hitherto depended too much upon Government. Even a social reform we have not dared to undertake without loudly calling for the aid of the Government ; widow marriage is to be legalised, polygamy to be abolished, obscene literature to be suppressed and for all these we have poured out deep bewailings into the ears of the ruling race. We have thus rendered ourselves quite helpless and placed our destinies at the tender mercies of our Governors. We have forgotten the art of taking care of ourselves, and if we continue in this state a century more, we shall be under the necessity of seeking the aid of our rulers even in managing our own household affairs. It behoves our countrymen, therefore, to bestir themselves and urge upon the Government with all their might to teach them to govern themselves." ¹ The third

¹ *Ibid*, 'The Municipal Reformation,' April 15, 1875. Bankimchandra, however, in his satire entitled "Discourse between a Monkey and a Babu" ridiculed the

reason adduced by Sisirkumar in favour of the introduction of local self-government was that it would teach the Ryots that they have got certain rights and that this consciousness would encourage them to resist the oppressions of the Zamindars and the petty government servants. "The Government has done much to conciliate the higher classes of Indians, but it has done nothing to conciliate the masses. The masses pay all the taxes, and what do they get in return? Education they have not got. Protection? Protection from whom? They get no protection from the oppression of the Government servants. They are much more oppressed by the police and tax-gatherers than the better classes. As for protection from the strong, it is true that the stronger now cannot beat the weak at his pleasure, but he can do worse. He can harass the Ryots, ruin them in law courts, and that is worse than beating. The self-government measure will, however, be a real boon to them. It will teach them that they have political rights, which they can exercise to their advantage, and thus they will be naturally more loyal to the constituted authorities than they are at present." ¹

His idea about local self-government, however, was far more comprehensive than what Lord Ripon

idea of demanding or accepting local self-government without first securing national autonomy.

¹ *Ibid*, 'Muffassil, Self-government', Aug. 31, 1882.

conceived it to be, or what has been conceded even now. He wanted the introduction of a purely elective system in the Mufassil municipalities.¹ He strongly objected to the appointment of magistrates as chairmen of District Boards.²

He would like to transfer the control of the police to the District Boards, just as in England the County Councils control the local police force. "If the police are placed under the management of the Boards, there will be less oppression; the innocent will have less chance of being hauled up and the guilty of escaping. We can also venture to add that if the Police Department is made over to the Boards, the feeling that the Government is alien, will disappear from the country."³ Moreover, he wanted that the old Panchayats should be revived in the villages. The headman should be elected by the villagers and he should be empowered by the Government to receive all complaints regarding petty offences. The suitors themselves should nominate the Panchayat to decide their case. Thus according to Sisirkumar, there should be no permanent Panchayat. "The cases to be tried by these village Panchayats may be limited to simple hurt, assault, abuse, trespass, and debts not exceeding a small sum. In the cases of hurt, assault, abuse and cattle

¹ *Ibid*, March 16, 1876.

² *Ibid*, May 25, 1882.

³ *Ibid*, June 1, 1882.

trespass, the power of the Panchayat may be limited to awarding damage not exceeding Rupees five. ” ¹

When Sir Richard Temple wanted to introduce an elective system in the Calcutta Municipality, the powerful justices (municipal commissioners were called justices in imitation of the English justices of peace) strongly opposed the measure. Sir Richard desired that the people should express their opinion in favour of election. Sisirkumar, who enjoyed the confidence of Sir Richard Temple, galvanised public opinion in support of the elective system.² In 1882 he recounted with great self-satisfaction the part he had played in introducing the elective system in the Calcutta Corporation.³ On the eve of the first election

¹ *Ibid*, October 26, 1876.

² *Ibid*, February 17, 1876.

³ *Ibid*, July 13, 1882. ‘It is not known how this great privilege came to be granted to the citizens of Calcutta; but this important matter was settled between two individuals, one a ruler and the other one of the subject race, viz., Sir Richard Temple and a Hindu. Said Sir Richard: “Do you really think that the scheme will succeed?” “Yes, if you sincerely wish it,” replied the Hindu. “But I do sincerely wish it,” replied Sir Richard Temple. The Hindu said: “But the European residents in the town will make such a row that it would be a very disagreeable, perhaps a difficult task for your Honour to go through that opposition.” “You mean the shop-keepers, well, if the scheme fails it will not be for

to the Calcutta Corporation he wrote an article entitled "Calcutta under Trial" explaining clearly the principles which should guide the voters in exercising their franchise. If the advice which he tendered in that article be followed by the electors in India to-day, much of the corruption in political life would vanish away. To him the exercise of franchise was 'the discharge of a sacred commission' and he demanded of the elector the exertion of all his intellectual and moral powers in voting for a particular candidate.¹

IV. His Views on Civil Liberty.

Like Raja Rammohun Roy, Sisirkumar was a strong advocate of civil liberty. The Raja's opinion was that Indians have been compensated for the loss of political liberty by the recognition of civil liberty under the British Government. He had warned the Government that if the civil liberty which the Indian people had fondly expected to enjoy under the British Government be curtailed, there would arise grave discontent amongst them. In the sixties and seventies of the last century serious restrictions were placed on the civil liberty of the people. Sisirkumar

want of active interest on my part." He kept his word, and the scheme succeeded.'

¹ *Ibid*, March 30, 1876.

pointed out forcibly how the ordinary rights of citizenship had been curtailed, one after another, how the Criminal Procedure Code was followed by the Dramatic Performances Act, the Press Act and the Arms Act, and how these measures gave the magistrate "absolute control over the rights, human and divine, of the people of India."¹ The Raja had admitted that under the Muhammadan Government the very existence of civil liberty was unknown. But Sisirkumar now pointed out that even the despotic Mughal Government did not take away from the subjects the right of bearing arms or of holding a religious controversy with a Mullah.

The Raja had thought that codification of law would guarantee civil liberty to the people, inasmuch as they would be able to know their rights and would be saved from the arbitrary decision of the judges. But Sisirkumar maintained that the Civil Procedure Act of 1859, the Criminal Law (Act XLV of 1860), the Evidence Act I of 1872 and the Criminal Procedure Act (Act X of 1872) have failed to give any satisfaction to the people; "and some of them are regarded as a standing menace to the liberty of the subject." When Mr. Whitley Stokes made further attempts to codify the existing laws in 1877, Sisirkumar protested against the proposed codification. He admitted, indeed,

¹ *Ibid*, January 25, 1880.

that the civil laws of the Hindus are susceptible of much improvement, "but the task of reformation in this respect cannot be safely entrusted to the hands of foreigners. So far it is quite certain that certain branches of judiciary laws can be codified with advantage, but any wholesale codification might prove extremely dangerous so long as the task of framing codes is not made over to the people for whose benefit they are to be framed." ¹

The chief guarantee of civil liberty lies in the fair and impartial administration of justice. It is for this reason that Raja Rammohun made such heroic efforts to reform the judiciary in India. But most of the charges, which he brought against the judicial system in India, were repeated more than forty years after his death by Bankimchandra and Sisirkumar. Sisirkumar might have been influenced by Bankimchandra in his views about the costliness of law-courts and the utter helplessness of the peasants. The courts in the opinion of both Bankimchandra and Sisirkumar, are a powerful machinery for the Zamindar and Mahajan to crush the Ryots. But neither Rammohun nor Bankimchandra did suggest that the revival of the old Panchayat courts would remedy the multifarious evils from which the people had been suffering in the law courts. Sisirkumar, however, evinced

¹ *Ibid*, "Codification in India," June 28, 1877.

a strong faith in the village Panchayat as a powerful agent for protecting the life and liberty of the subjects. He maintained that the elaborate technicalities of the Roman Jurisprudence and the English Common Law were not suited to India ; so means must be found out to give justice to the poor and ignorant villagers in the cheapest and speediest way possible. The Panchayat alone can administer justice in this way.¹

Like Rammohun, Sisirkumar too held the jury system to be a guarantee of civil liberty of the people. But some of his contemporaries held the jury system to be an antiquated anomaly in the modern age. Sisirkumar adduced an original reason for the employment of trial by jury in India. He held that the Civilian judges lose their faith in the goodness of man. They constantly deal with criminals and think every person, brought before them, to be a criminal. Moreover, they contract a habit of punishing men. To counteract these propensities in their minds jurors should be employed.²

Like all other political writers of this period Sisirkumar too advocated absolute equality of law between the Indians and Europeans.³

¹ *Ibid*, " The New Code of Civil Procedure and the Panchayat System," October 26, 1876.

² *Ibid*, 1874, p. 99.

³ *Ibid*, 2nd February, 1882 ; 6th Sept., 1883 ; 20th Sept., 1883.

V. Theory of Punishment.

Sisirkumar's theory of punishment marks him as one of the original thinkers in the domain of political philosophy. The basic problem of politics is human nature itself. It is the difference of opinions regarding human nature and its capacities for improvement which has given birth to different political theories. A believer in the democratic form of government must be an optimist about the potential powers of human mind. Sisirkumar as a democrat believed progress to be the essential characteristic of human nature. From his studies of Vaishnavism he came to hold that even the vilest of sinners could be reclaimed from the evil course of life. If this be true of sinners, he could find no reason why criminals could not be reformed by good education. His contention is that the dealings of the Government with the criminal must be characterised by pity, sympathy and brotherly love for the unfortunate creature. He made a strong appeal for giving up that spirit of revenge towards the criminal which characterised the barbarous people.¹

The particular and immediate fact which evoked the sentiment of pity and sympathy in his mind was the excessive severity of prison-life

under the British Indian administration. He proved from government reports that one-tenth of the convicts died within the prison. He also proved that the health of all the prisoners was undermined owing to the bad diet and worse sanitary arrangements provided for in Bengal jails.¹ Sisirkumar attacked the Government in season and out of season like a Philistine, as he himself admits, but at heart he was not at all a Philistine but a follower of the Religion of Love. This inner religion of Sisirkumar led him to write on the woes and miseries of prison-life again and again.

He maintains that the criminal propensities are a mental disease.² Ignorance is the chief cause of this disease. He quotes Locke to show that "of all men we meet, nine out of ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education." It is the duty of society to "bring out and train those divine principles of

¹ "When the tenth part of the entire jail population are obliged to die, we think it would not be unfair to calculate that more than one-fourth are all but sacrificed, and that all of them are hurt, some grievously and some slightly..... Mr. O'Donnell called the attention (in the House of Commons) to the 'flogging of 11,000 prisoners in the gaols of Bengal during the period of excessive mortality between the 1st day of January, 1879 and the 31st of March, 1880, almost exclusively on charge of short work.'"—*A. B. Patrika*, September 14, 1882.

² *Ibid*, 1870, p. 3.

justice, right, truth, goodness and love, that exist germinally in every soul." If society fails in its duty to educate the citizens, it should not assume the power of punishing those who might go astray from the path of rectitude. He was quite conscious of the fact that society was not organised and developed enough to assume such responsibility. If, then, the ignorant people are to be sent to prison, let efforts be made to reclaim them from bad life. "They should be in reform schools and moral hospitals, under the gentle discipline and tender care of those whose great souls are tuned to the keynotes of love and wisdom."¹

He finds another cause of crime in poverty. He holds that the majority of the people who are sent to jail are not criminals by nature, but being severely pressed by poverty take to evil course. So he warmly supported Miss Carpenter's efforts to establish a Reformatory School. He advised that in such a school the convicts should be trained to

¹ *Ibid*, 'Educate our Criminals,' August 8, 1870. This essay reveals the kind and loving heart of a true Vaishnava. "Our heart aches for the unfortunate children of the earth, made so by organisation, ignorance, base surroundings, stern necessity and society, blind to its highest interest. We cannot find it in our soul to condemn any one, to blame any one, but sympathising with all, even the most hardened criminal, we feel it our duty to press their claims for education and kindness upon reformers and philanthropists everywhere."

a profession which they may practise to earn their livelihood after their release from jails.¹

He suggests that steps should be taken gradually to eradicate punishment from the system of government. He asks whether it is not possible to banish crime altogether from society by devoting that labour and money which are spent for arresting, convicting and punishing the criminals to the imparting of education to the people. Sisirkumar, here, showed himself to be too sanguine about human nature. In spite of the prevalence of universal compulsory education, the crime record in the United States of America is highest to-day. It might be said of course that the masses in America are not receiving education of the right sort, but it is difficult to devise any educational system which would do away with the necessity of maintaining police and prison.

Sisirkumar was not unaware of this difficulty. He did not demand immediate abolition of punishment. He threw in a suggestion which might be taken up in future, when the social instinct of man would be highly developed.² In another article he admitted that under the present circumstances punishment cannot be eliminated altogether.³

¹ *Ibid*, 1876, 27th Falgun.

² *Ibid*, 1870, pp. 410-10.

³ *Ibid*, 1874, p. 64.

But he advocated the immediate abolition of death sentence. According to him there are three objects of punishment—to reform the criminal, to show a deterrent example to society with the object of checking crimes in future, and, to make compensation for the damages done by the criminal. He does not admit that the satisfaction of a base passion like revenge should be an object of punishment. He tries to show that none of these three objects can be fulfilled by awarding death sentence. If a criminal is hanged, his reform is out of the question. As regards deterring others from committing crimes, he says that those who commit the most heinous crimes, suffer from a temporary insanity at the time of committing the crime. Fear of death cannot find any place in their mind at that time. Moreover, these persons commit the heinous crime at a time when life becomes unbearable to them. At that time death sentence does not rouse any fear in their mind. As regards the third object of punishment, there would be no compensation for the death of the murdered by taking away the life of the murderer. Then he shows that crimes have not increased in those countries where death sentence has been abolished. Lastly, he takes recourse to the political philosophy of Locke to show that death sentence cannot be legally awarded by Government, because Government was originally instituted for the protection of life and property of the

people. Moreover, nobody can claim any right even over one's own life. That which does not belong to one cannot be given to another. So government is not justified in awarding death sentence.¹

Co-operation of the subjects and a close identity of interests between the rulers and the ruled are essential for the success of any form of government. From the seventies of the last century the spirit of co-operation and sympathy between the government and the governed in India began to decline. The frequent comment of the administrators of this country to the effect that the people do not co-operate with the police in apprehending criminals and show active sympathy for the latter, evoked from Sisirkumar the following observations: "A man charged with crime is sympathised with, because, firstly, in India people are indiscriminately apprehended, and no thought is given to the subject whether a man is sent to the lock-up upon sufficient or insufficient evidence. The second reason is that, a man so charged, is treated like a beast of prey in a cage, and incessantly persecuted sometimes to death and is never allowed a fair chance of proving his innocence."²

¹ *Ibid*, 1874, p. 64.

² *Ibid*, March 23, 1882.

VI. *His Views on Education.*

Sisirkumar was a champion of high education in Bengal. He was not actually opposed to the education of the masses, but he directed his energy to the advocacy of high education of the middle class. He believed that education of the middle class alone can bring about an improvement in the political status of the country.

He thought it a duty of the state to provide education for its citizens. He took grave exception to Lord Lawrence's pronouncement to the effect that Government was not bound to give education to the people.¹ During the administration of Lord Mayo the Krishnagar and Berhampore Colleges were abolished and the Sanskrit and Patna Colleges were threatened with extinction. Sisirkumar vehemently protested against these steps and his writings were partially responsible for the organisation of as many as sixty protest meetings all over Bengal.² He wrote: "The Government openly declared that to give education to the people was to sow seeds of sedition, and seriously contemplated the throwing of all possible obstacles in the way of their attaining to high education. In fact, the attitude of Government towards the education of

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, March 28, 1872.

² *Ibid*, Feb., 17, 1870; May, 26, 1870; March 28, 1872.

the people appeared to be anything but favourable, and the general belief is that our rulers would no longer help the cause of education.”¹ When, however, Sir Richard Temple took steps to revive the Berhampore and Krishnagar Colleges and to establish a new College at Rajshahi and several high schools at Rungpore, Ranchi and Chittagong, Sisirkumar gave up his attitude of suspicion towards the Government. “All that the rulers can do,” wrote he in appreciation of Sir Richard’s efforts, “is to merit dominion by promoting the happiness of those under them. If the English perform their duty in this respect, the gratitude of India and the admiration of the world will accompany their name through all ages, whatever may be the revolutions of futurity.”

Raja Rammohun made heroic efforts to make the English language the medium of high education in India. The purpose for which he strove to bring in the current of the “English education” in India seems to have been fulfilled within forty years of his death. In the seventies of the last century the cry was raised for imparting high education through the medium of vernaculars. Sisirkumar wrote in 1873 that high education should be imparted through the medium of vernaculars without impairing the standard.² He further developed this idea

¹ *Ibid*, Sep. 23, 1875.

² *Ibid*, June 5, 1873, p. 133.

in an article published in 1884. He argued that the education imparted through the medium of a foreign language cannot be a healthy and sound one. In the majority of cases the mind of the learner hardly reaches the subject-matter with any degree of relish or vigour and in some cases it is utterly wrecked in the way. Secondly he held that the English medium has made learning a monopoly of the few. "Those alone who are rich in money may go through the forms of it. Those who are rich in money and also rich in intellect may benefit by it to some extent." But the general mass of the people cannot derive any benefit from it. Such an education creates a new caste, cut off from the people and with little sympathy for them. "That caste is full of pedantry and superficial ideas." Thirdly, such an education is utterly ruinous to the nation. Knowledge cannot take root in the national mind if it is imparted through the medium of a foreign tongue.¹ Sisirkumar was certainly not against the cultivation of the English language itself, but he wanted that it should be studied "as a subject in itself, as people of other countries study languages foreign to those countries."²

¹ This argument about a new caste seems to be an echo from Bankimchandra.

² *A. B. Patrika*, 'The Medium of High Education,' March 27, 1884.

Sisirkumar was one of the earliest advocates of technical and industrial education in this country. In 1875 he pleaded for the establishment of a college of technology in Bengal. He was painfully conscious of the backwardness of industries in this country, and to remove this he wanted that the middle class people who have had already some general education should take admission in the proposed college. He drew up and published a curriculum for such a college. Besides theoretical training for a period of five years, the students should have practical training in the workshop for two hours every day. They should be trained in the following manufacturing processes :—Cloth manufactures, weaving, bleaching, furnishing, dyeing and printing; jute manufactures; silk manufactures; sugar; oil paper manufactures; etc. He calculated the annual expenditure for the maintenance of such a college to be Rs. 16,000.¹

We have already mentioned that Sisirkumar did not devote much thought on the education of the masses. He thought that the education of the peasants should be eminently practical in character, teaching them how to improve the soil and the method of cultivation. They must first of all be supplied with the means of sustaining their life and then they might be given literary education. He suggested that the money which the Government

¹ *A. B. Patrika*, December 2, 1875.

had been spending on their education would be better utilised if a Peoples' Bank were established to free them from the clutches of the Mahajans.¹

It would be wrong, however, to think that he was altogether against literary education of the masses. "The real point at issue is not whether the education of the lower classes is desirable or not, there is but one opinion on this point, but whether it is desirable to extend lower education at the expense of the higher. The Bengalees contend that it is not."²

VII. His Views on the Freedom of the Press.

Sisirkumar wrote much on the freedom of the Press, but he could not improve upon the masterly arguments given by Raja Rammohun Roy in his famous appeal for the liberty of the Press. Almost from the beginning of the publication of the *Patrika* from Calcutta, the Government looked upon it with grave suspicion. This attitude of the Government reacted upon him and he frankly stated that it was the object of the Indian Press to oppose the Government. "The chief function of the native press, like that of the opposition members, is to oppose the Government measures or in other words, to seek the interest of the people." He admitted that the inevitable consequence of

¹ *Ibid*, 19th Feb. 1874, p. 18, and Feb. 21, 1878.

² *Ibid*, August 18, 1870.

such criticism would be to create a distrust towards the Government.¹ In another article he said that the only instrument with which the people can fight with the Government is a newspaper.²

He contended that the freedom of the Press is necessary for good government. It diverts the discontent of the people "from the internal system where it may prove dangerous, to the surface."³ When the Vernacular Press Act was passed at one sitting, he suddenly changed his paper by herculean efforts from a bilingual one to a pure English newspaper. Having thus evaded the rigorous restrictions of the Vernacular Press Act he wrote a series of articles condemning the Act and proving the utility of a Free Press.⁴ The repeal of the Act in 1882 removed much of the suspicion against the Government from his mind. "Hitherto the custom with newspapers generally was to view all Government measures, even when they were palpably meant for the good of the people with suspicion; but now that the Press has been taken into confidence by the Government, its criticisms are likely to be free from that hostile attitude, which the Press had hitherto

¹ *Ibid*, September 28, 1873.

² *Ibid*, January 1, 1874.

³ *Ibid*, July 1, 1875.

⁴ *Ibid*, Sept. 21, 1882.

assumed in discussing the measure of Government. ”¹

VII. Government in relation to Economic Activities.

Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, Sisirkumar believed that India can attain prosperity and greatness only by the industrialisation of the country. He held that in commerce the relation between England and India is like that of the labourer and capitalist. As the labourers produce the wealth but the capitalists enjoy it, so does India produce

¹ *Ibid*, March 21, 1878.

It is to be noted here that the Vernacular Press Act was supported even by some vernacular papers. The monthly magazine “Bandhab,” edited by Kaliprasanna Ghosh supported it on the ground that it aimed at punishing those who were the enemies of mankind. First, it would punish those who attack the English as oppressors. But as a matter of fact the English government is bringing about the national unification of India; it is trying to ameliorate social and political condition of the people; and it has conferred greater amount of individual liberty than what the people had enjoyed under the Hindu and Mussalman governments. The journalists who would ignore these benefits of the British rule and only incite the people to discontent really deserve punishment. Secondly, those who by their writings would rouse religious passions or would intimidate others, would be brought within the ambit of law. Persons who inflict so much injury on society should really be punished. “Bandhab,” Vol. IV, No. 2, 1285 B. S.

raw materials and England derives profit from it by turning them into finished products.¹ So long as India would continue to produce raw materials only she would remain poor, as America remained comparatively a poor country till she turned to manufacture. "To induce the people to take to agriculture is to reduce a country to poverty. The art of agriculture even carried to high perfection has not been able as yet to make a nation rich."² He wrote a series of articles suggesting the introduction of new industries in India. For some of these suggestions he was indebted to the rising school of economists of Bombay. Sisirkumar made an independent study also of the industrial possibilities of India. He suggested that labour and raw materials being found in plenty and the process of manufacture being comparatively an easy one the following industries should be introduced and developed in India :—cloth, woolen, glass, pottery, bricks, cement, tanning, paper, candles, marble works, manure and soap.³ We have already shown how' he appealed to the Government for the establishment of a college of technology in Bengal.

¹ *Ibid*, 1871, p. 45.

² *Ibid*, October 28, 1875.

³ *Ibid*, October 28, 1875.

For the development of these industries he wanted that the Government should adopt the policy of Protection as against Free trade. He held that Free trade policy was adopted in India on the pressure of the Manchester manufacturers and not on purely economic grounds. He showed that even a staunch advocate of Free trade like Mill favoured a policy of Protection for a country like India. He wrote : “ What does he (Mill) say about this protection to native industry ? ‘The only case in which on mere principles of political economy, protecting duties can be defensible is when they are imposed (especially in a young and rising nation) in hopes of naturalising a foreign industry, in itself, perfectly suitable to the circumstances of the country.’ Is not the cotton manufacture in India, for example, a rising industry, requiring encouragement in its infancy? ” He was a keen student of the contemporary colonial¹ development and he showed how the British colonies were adopting the policy of Protection. He saw that Victoria and South Australia began to impose tariffs from 1879 and their example was followed by Western Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Queensland, Canada and the Cape Colony. “Among England’s own colonies, heavy import duties are levied. Those that had not imposed them in 1879 are now imposing

¹ *Ibid*, May 23, 1878 ; March 23, 1882.

them at a high rate, and everywhere they have been increased within the last two or three years to an enormous extent.....But in India Free trade is enforced with a vengeance. ”¹

Free trade was the main plank of the politico-economic doctrine of *Laissez-faire*. In England the Government refused to intervene on behalf of the poor artisans out of respect for the *Laissez-faire* doctrine in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. The introduction of the Free trade policy during the ministry of Sir Robert Peel completed the movement begun by Adam Smith.

In India, on the other hand, public opinion sought the abandonment of the *Laissez-faire* policy in trade, but adhered to that policy in regulating the relation between labour and capital. Sisirkumar advocated the intervention of the Government in matters of trade, but would not tolerate any interference from Government in regulating the hours of labour in factories. In his attempt to show the needlessness of the Factory Act, Sisirkumar wrote : “ The operatives in our mills are not slaves ; or in other words, they are at perfect liberty to serve in the mills or give up their employment and seek a livelihood elsewhere.”² This contradictory attitude of Sisirkumar towards the *Laissez-faire* policy lends support to the

¹ *Ibid*, April 6, 1882.

² *Ibid*, January 16, 1880.

theory that political circumstances give rise to political and economic doctrines.

In pleading for a policy of Protection, Sisirkumar knew from the very beginning, that he was crying in the wilderness. Yet at first he could not think of any other means of developing the Indian industries. But the people of Dacca, on seeing the determined attempt of the Manchester manufacturers to hamper the growing cotton industry of Bombay, resolved to boycott Manchester cloth in the middle of 1875. At that time Sisirkumar thought that the attempt of the Dacca people was premature. "Before we form such a combination it is necessary to establish mills to supply our own requirements."¹ But in less than a month he was converted to the creed of economic boycott. He thought that India would gain great political advantages by buying less goods from England. "The lesser India pays to England, the more she will be generously treated.....If India paid less the English people would not much care to give the people some power ; and if India paid nothing at all, they would not object to leave the country in our hands."²

¹ "The Dacca Prakash states that the people of Dacca are combining to abjure Manchester clothes."—*Ibid*, Sept. 9, 1875.

² *Ibid*, October 7, 1875, p. 3.

We have shown before that most of the leaders of thought in Bengal in the pre-Mutiny era had advocated increment of pay in lower grade of public officials, probably with the hope that all such posts would come to Indians. But during the two decades following the Mutiny the cost of administration rose so high that not only the public but also the Government became anxious to curtail expenditure. In this period Sisirkumar pointed out several means for curtailing public expenditure and for increasing public revenue. The first and foremost of his suggestions regarding economy was the Indianisation of the services. He pointed out that 130 officers performing the duties of Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Judicial Commissioners, etc., draw the sum of Rs. 2,537,800 annually from the State. "Need we mention here, that 130 Natives of equal, if not of better merit, would perform the same duties for the tenth part of the above sum? How is it possible for a very poor country to keep its finances healthy, if she is made to import richly paid officers from a foreign country to perform the commonest duties of the state?"¹ The second

¹ *Ibid*, April 21, 1870.

Also 1871, p. 43. "Fifty thousand deserving Natives are pining away under discouragement, disappointment and poverty, while Government servants are indentured from England at heavy costs."

means suggested by Sisirkumar was the reduction of military expenditure. He held that India did not require a huge army to protect herself against foreign invasion, as the neighbouring Asiatic countries were weak.¹ He said that if drastic steps be not taken to reduce expenditure, an inevitable crush would make the Indian Government bankrupt.²

Sisirkumar strongly advocated Indianisation of the services, but at the same time he suspected that those Indians who receive high appointments sell themselves to the Government. "The Deputy Magistrates have been purchased by Government and we have sold the best specimens of our nation ; if they altogether forget their old ties and turn pliant tools and slaves in the hands of their new master, the loss to the country become not only immense, but we set our own countrymen against us. That there is a danger of these Magistrates turning as great a foe to their country as some civilian magistrates are, will be clear to those who have given the subject any thought. The reason is obvious. The Government appeals to their interest and selfishness, and the people to their patriotism and other higher feelings ; but interest generally gains the day."—*A. B. Patrika*, June 25, 1874. This is exactly the reason why the extremist party in the Congress gave up the old cry of Indianisation of the services and began to demand absolute control of the administrative machinery.

¹ *Ibid*, Sept. 15, 1878.

² *Ibid*, September 15, 1878. "The country cannot bear the strain any longer. The frequent famines are indications which are unmistakable, and if statesmen

Sisirkumar condemned the imposition of the road cess most severely, but he was not altogether hostile to other forms of taxation, if the urgency of imposing one could be proved. The only safeguard he demanded was that the taxes should be levied according to sound principles of taxation. What he understood to be fair principles of taxation will be seen from the following :—“ The cardinal principle of a sound system of taxation is that the greatest amount of money might be brought into public treasury with the least degree of oppression to the subject. Oppression may proceed from two causes, first, if the incidence of the tax is disproportionate to the means of the parties; secondly, if the machinery for collection is such as to leave it open to them to commit acts of oppression intentionally or unwillingly.”¹ He judged the case of income tax by these two canons and came to the conclusion that it was a fair tax. It must be remembered that the Anglo-Indian Press and the newspapers controlled by the Zamindars were condemning the imposition of the income tax in one voice at that time. When in 1872 proposals were being made to abolish the income tax, he pleaded for its retention on three grounds. First, that as the tax is levied on satisfy their conscience by the delusive thought that retrenchment is not possible, the insolvency of the nation will follow inevitably.”

¹ *Ibid*, February 7, 1870.

annual incomes above Rs. 750, one man only in eight hundred is to pay this tax; and secondly that as the English merchants, planters and officers would also pay it, they would join the Indians in securing economy in administration.¹ Thirdly, "the abolition of the income tax will result in the transfer of a burden which is now borne by the rich, who can most easily bear it, to the shoulders of an overburdened and starving population." ² It is difficult to find any exception to these arguments in the light of modern theories of public finance. When a proposal was made to tax tobacco in 1870, he opposed it on the ground that it would impose great hardship on the peasants; he suggested instead a moderate tax on marriage. He held that the Muhammadan rulers had levied such a tax and the Zamindars of Bengal levied it at his time, so the tax was an indigenous one.³

It is curious to note that he suggested an increase of salt tax in the place of road cess. He wrote that salt was being sold at two annas per seer; if the salt tax be increased by six annas per maund, it would raise the price of salt by a little more than half-a-pice per seer and the people would readily consent to pay that, provided the road cess was abolished.⁴

¹ *Ibid*, 1872, p. 59.

² *Ibid*, 1872, p. 252.

³ *Ibid*, April 21, 1870.

⁴ *Ibid*, April 12, 1877.

He criticised severely the guaranteed system of railways.¹ He thought that canals are far more important than railways, because canals not only establish communication between different parts of the country but also supply the fields with water.²

VIII. His Views on Imperialism.

The Crystal Palace speech of Disraeli in 1872 marks the beginning of the New Imperialism of Great Britain. The *Laissez-faire* policy which had been followed by Great Britain in her relation with the colonies since the American War of Independence now gave way before the policy of closer relation between the colonies and the mother country. This change of policy had had its repercussion on the policy of British Indian Government towards the Indian States. Dodwell is of opinion that the fiction of sovereignty of Indian states disappeared in 1858; and thenceforward the Princes of India became subjects, high in rank, indeed, but still the subjects of the Queen; and their international position disappeared. But in 1877 Sisirkumar pointed out that in 1858 it was settled that the Indian Princes should be maintained in their sovereignty in consideration of the facts that they had remained friendly to the British during the Mutiny and that

¹ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1872.

² *Ibid.*, September 27, 1877,

the territories annexed by Dalhousie had proved to be hotbeds of sedition. In 1862 Lord Canning made a beginning of the policy of asserting suzerainty over the princes by granting Sanads of succession to them and then by conferring Knighthood of the Star of India Order on them. These were but indirect steps; the claim of suzerainty was boldly proclaimed during the premiership of Disraeli (1874-1880).¹ It reflects great credit on the political insight of Sisirkumar Ghosh that he was able to discover the drift of the situation which led successively to the deposition of Malhar Rao, the Gaekwar of Baroda, in 1875, to the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1875-76,² the passing of the Royal Titles Bill in 1876 and to the holding

¹ *Ibid*, January 18, 1877. When the Maharaja of Patiala was nominated a member of the Legislative Council the "Hindu Patriot" wrote: "Not only is such a relationship between Sovereign Princes unknown in civilised history, but would be repelled with indignation if ever attempted to be enforced between any two given Princes of Europe."—The "Hindu Patriot," January 20, 1862. This comment shows that the Indian public considered the princes to be sovereign in 1862 but the British Indian Government had already begun to look upon the princes as subjects.

² On the significance of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, Sisirkumar commented: "The Prince's visit was in fact something like the Digvijaya of the Pandavas prior to the celebration of the Rajshuya jajna. The visit had an object and that object was to prepare the ground for a revolution. All the princes of India were brought together

of the Darbar in 1877. When the Gaekwar was being tried by a commission on a charge of attempting to poison the Resident, Colonel Phayre, Sisirkumar wrote a series of articles asking for a definition of the prerogatives and privileges of the Indian princes. He held that the Gaekwar was a sovereign prince and as such was "not under the jurisdiction of our Penal Code."¹ The Royal Titles Bill was introduced in the House of Commons by Disraeli on the 17th February 1876. Sisirkumar saw in the Bill an attempt to divest the Indian princes of their sovereignty. He wrote on the 8th June, 1876: "They can now depose an Indian prince if they choose it, but they cannot do it without rousing an intense clamour. The princes demand an international law, they claim independence and resent interference, but if the British India Government is once acknowledged as the Lord of the princes, the people will feel less if this acknowledged Lord interfere with his vassals."² That the frank assumption of the

during the Prince's visit to India and called upon to pay homage to the Heir Apparent." But Sisirkumar believed that "as the Nizam could not be present, his minister Sir Salar Jang was invited to England and induced to promise to send the Nizam to pay his homage to Her Majesty when another befitting occasion should occur." That occasion was the Imperial Darbar of 1877.—*A. B. Patrika*, January 18, 1877.

¹ *Ibid*, January 28, 1875.

² *Ibid*, 'The Title of Empress,' June 8, 1876.

position of suzerain was the outcome of the deliberate imperialistic policy of Disraeli is also admitted now by Prof. Ramsay Muir.¹ Sisirkumar's intellect was keen enough to understand clearly this new orientation of the British Imperialism. He wrote that the real object of the Imperial Assemblage was to declare openly that the English are the paramount power in India and that the princes are all vassals.

Sisirkumar regretted the loss of the last vestige of independence of the princes, on the ground that the desire of Indians to be ruled by princes of their own race was frustrated thereby.²

Sisirkumar is of opinion that Imperialism, that is, the subjection of many countries to one, is harmful not only to the conquered but also to the conqueror. He holds that whenever a nation or a people conquered an empire, its decadence began from that time. He shows how the Athenians, Romans and the Mughals lost the finer traits of their character on the assumption of imperial

¹ "He sent the Prince of Wales on tour through India (1875), thus making the British monarchy a living reality to the princes and peoples of that vast land; he invented the sonorous title of Empress of India, and ordained that all the princes should be assembled in a great Durbar to render homage."—Ramsay Muir's "A Short History of the British Commonwealth," Vol. II, p. 594.

² *Ibid*, October 4, 1877.

power. According to him, an empire is especially dangerous to the liberty of a democratic people like the English. Those Englishmen who come out to India as officers contract a fondness for the despotic system of government. When they and their sons go back to England and some of them even enter Parliament they vitiate the pure democratic atmosphere of their mother-country by showing their leanings for despotism. Hence he saw in the continuation of holding of India as a mere dependency a danger to the English constitution.¹ He might have derived the idea from Edmund Burke. But there is evidence to show that he was in touch with the contemporary thought on anti-imperialism. In 1880 he gave a summary of an anti-imperialistic speech of Sir Arthur Hobhouse and lent his own support to the arguments of Sir Arthur.² Thus did Sisirkumar foreshadow that anti-imperialistic movement in India which has become almost a part of the Congress activity to-day.

¹ *Ibid*, April 31, 1874.

² *Ibid*, December 31, 1880.

CHAPTER VII

THE MUSLIM SCHOOL OF POLITICAL THOUGHT.

When the British Power was first established in Bengal, the Muslims were reconciled to it by the policy which virtually left the judicial administration of the country in their hands. Raja Rammohun Roy in his evidence on the judicial system of India submitted to the Board of Control on the 18th September, 1831, said that the criminal law “has been made a regular study only by the respectable Mohammedans, who, when they attain a certain proficiency, are styled Maulvies, a term equivalent to Doctors of Law.”¹ Being asked whether the native law assessors were generally competent, the Raja wrote : “they are generally so : some of the Muftis (Muslim law assessors) are men of such high honour and integrity, that they may be entrusted with the power of a jury with perfect safety; and they are all of the most essential utility, and indeed the main instrument for expediting the business of the criminal courts. However highly or moderately qualified the European Judges may have been, the business has been advantageously conducted

¹ ‘ Questions and Answers on the Judicial System of India,’ p. 64.

through the assistance and co-operation of these Mohammedan assessors for a period of 40 years past.”¹ As regards the respective merits of Hindu and Muslim lawyers the Raja said: “Among the Mohammedan lawyers I have met with some honest men. The Hindu lawyers are in general not well spoken of, and they do not enjoy much of the confidence of the public.”² When Lord Bentinck opened certain judicial offices to Indians the Government appointed the majority of officers from the Muslim community.³

But the Muslim community began to lose its position in public service and public life from the time of the introduction of the English language as the medium of official transactions. The Secretary to Bengal Government in the Persian Department, in a letter dated the 26th June, 1829, to the Committee of Public Instruction, announced that

¹ *Ibid*, p. 58.

² *Ibid*, p. 23.

³ Many readers of the “Samachar Darpan” complained in the “Bangabhumi”: “We had understood that the consideration of our Sovereign was extended equally to all. Of this we have now a proof.....It is only to Moossolmans that the favour of Government has been extended; the names of only one or two Hindus appear.”—“Samachar Darpan,” March 17, 1832.

This shows the position of the Hindus in 1832. The quarrel between the Hindus and the Mohammedans over Government posts is thus a century old.

it was the intention of the Government to render the English language gradually and eventually the language of public business. The Government Resolution of 7th March, 1835, diverted all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education to the encouragement of 'English education' alone. Lord Hardinge's Educational Resolution of the 10th October, 1844, made English the language of official business. H. H. Wilson in his evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons stated on the 18th July 1853, that, "Upon the determination to abolish the stipends, and the proposal to appropriate all funds to English education, there was a petition from the Moham-medans of Calcutta, signed by about 8,000 people including all the most respectable Maulavis and native gentlemen of that city. After objecting to it upon general principles, they said that the evident object of the Government was the conversion of the natives ; that they encouraged English exclusively and discouraged Mohammedan and Hindu studies, because they wanted the people to become Christians." ¹ This shows the aversion of the Mohammedan community towards English education in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Government, however, tried its best to induce the Mohammedans to learn the English

¹ Sixth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Territories, p. 12.

language and thereby occupy its legitimate share of public services. In 1826 the Committee of Public Instruction, acting under the direction of the Governor-General, established an English class in the Calcutta Madrassa. Between 1826 and 1851 the Madrassa produced only two students who passed the junior scholarship examination.¹ During the same period the Hooghly College, too, prepared only two junior scholars, Moosa Ali and Waris Ali. In 1851 the Government resolved to close the Anglo-Arabic and English classes and to organise an Anglo-Persian Department in the Calcutta Madrassa.

There is a general belief that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first Mohammedan to rouse his community to the importance of absorbing western culture and to organise them politically.² He rendered indeed yeoman's service to the cause of education, but the Bengal (with which Behar was then incorporated) Mohammadens were the first to welcome English education and to organise public associations. The Fifth Annual Report of the

¹ "Bengal Past and Present," January-March 1914, p. 96. The two students referred to were Abdul Luteef, the famous leader of the Mohammedan community, and Wuheedoon Nubbee.

² See General Graham's Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (London, 1909) and Dr. J. N. Farquhar's Modern Religious Movements in India, pp. 91-100.

British Indian Association, presented to the General Meeting on the 31st January, 1856, states: "The Committee rejoice at the formation of the Mahomedan Association at Calcutta." Then, in the wake of the foundation of the "National Society," "Hindu Mela" and "The National Paper," by the Hindus, the Mohammedans under the leadership of Nawab Amir Ali Khan, a scion of the famous Barh family of the Patna district, organised the National Mohammedan Association in Calcutta.¹ In 1863 Abdul Latif founded the Mohammedan Literary Society. "Its object like that of the informal gatherings, which he had held for many years at his private residence, was to break down prejudices and exclusiveness, and to interest its members in present-day politics and modern thought and learning."²

On the 30th January, 1868, Abdul Latif read a paper on the "Mohammedan Education in

¹ Mr. F. B. Bradley-Birt, I.C.S., in his *Twelve Men of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century* (S. K. Lahiri & Co.) writes: — "His (Nawab Amir Ali's) object in founding it was to unite all classes of Muhammedans so that they might work together for the common good. He recognised that cohesion meant strength and that one of the main reasons for the backwardness into which the Muhammedan community had fallen was its lack of organisation and of any representative body to take action in its behalf." — P. 94.

² *Ibid*, p. 125.

Bengal '' at the Bengal Social Science Association. In this paper he suggested the elevation of the Anglo-Persian Department of the Calcutta Madrasa to the status of a college. He supported his plea by the following arguments :—'' Mohammedan education can never cease to have a strongly marked feature of political interest, which will force itself on the notice of all who desire to make the enlightenment of the Indian races the handmaid of loyalty and devotion to the British power. I beg you to bear in mind that it is no longer open to debate whether respectable Mohammedans are willing to have their children imbued with the principles of a sound, healthy English education.'' ¹ It should be noted here that Sir Syed Ahmad began to collect funds for the foundation of the Aligarh College in 1872, that is four years after Abdul Latif's advocacy for the establishment of a separate college for the Mohammedans. Though Abdul Latif did not succeed in the realisation of his idea exactly in the shape he wanted it to be fulfilled, yet owing to the munificence of another Bengali Mohammedan, Haji Mahomed Mohsin of Hooghly, the Mohammedans of Bengal and Behar received great encouragement to pursue their studies in colleges in 1873. It was resolved by the Government to grant out of the Mohsin Trust Fund to

¹ Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, 1868, p. 61 ff.

the Mohammedan students two-thirds of their fees at any English School or College in Bengal.

Thus the Mohammedans of the Bengal Presidency got a start over their brethren of other provinces in English education owing to the public spirit of Haji Mahomed Mohsin, and the efforts of men like Nawab Amir Ali Khan Bahadur and Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur. In 1881-82 the number of Mussalman students pursuing their studies in colleges in the Bengal Presidency was 106 as against 30 in Madras, 7 in Bombay, 29 in the N.W. Provinces, 7 in Oudh, and 13 in the Punjab. In the High Schools of Bengal there were 3,831 Mussalman students, as against 117 in Madras, 118 in Bombay, 697 (including students in Middle Schools) in the N. W. Provinces, and 91 in the Punjab. Between 1858 and 1893, the Calcutta University produced 290 Mohammedan graduates, as against 29 of the Madras, 30 of the Bombay, 102 of the Punjab and 102 of the Allahabad University.¹

We do not find, indeed, a single Mohammedan in the Committees of the Landholders' Society, British India Society and the British Indian Association in its early days, but in 1879 we notice in a deputation of the British Indian Association to Lord Lytton to protest against the repeal of

¹ The statistics given above have been taken from Syed Mahmood's *History of English Education in India* (1781-1893), pp. 183 and 186.

duties on imported cotton goods the names of Nawab Amir Ali Khan Bahadur, Nawab Ahmed Ali and Nawab Mir Mahamed Ali.¹

The idea of agitating for “separate consideration” from the Government with a view to safe-guard and promote the interests of the Mohammedan community originated with the Bengal and Behar Mohammedans. Mr. Syed Mahmood, the distinguished son of the illustrious Sir Syed Ahmed, gives the credit for initiating this movement to the Muslim community of the Bengal Presidency. He writes:—“The ‘separate consideration’ of the subject of Muhammadan education arose in the following manner. In February, 1882, a Memorial was addressed to His Excellency the Marquis of Ripon by the National Muhammadan Association of Calcutta, calling attention to the decayed position of Muhammadans in India, to the causes which had in the opinion of the Memorialists led to the decadence, and to the circumstances which, in their belief, tended to perpetuate that condition.”² The Memorial, referred to above, succeeded not only in bringing the educational facilities to the Mohammedans, but also in obtaining a declaration of a new policy from the Government. The Resolution of the Government of

¹ *The Hindu Patriot*, March 10, 1879.

² Syed Mahmood's *History of English Education in India*, p. 171.

India, dated the 15th July, 1885, declared :—"It is only by raising their own educational qualifications to the level already attained by other races, that the Muhammadans can hope to win appointments that are awarded as the result of examination. But there are a large number of appointments, the gift of which lies in the hands of Local Governments, the High Courts, or Local Officers. The Governor-General in Council desires that in those provinces where Muhammadans do not receive their full share of state employment, the Local Governments and High Courts will endeavour to redress this inequality as opportunity offers, and will impress upon subordinate officers the importance of attending to this in their selection of candidates for appointments of the class last referred to." ¹

As a Mohammedan of the Patna District was the first to start the Mohammedan National Association, which was able to secure such an important concession from the Government, so was another Mohammedan of Behar the

¹ *Ibid*, p. 174, quoted from the Resolution of the Government of India, in the Home Department (Education) No. $\frac{7}{215-25}$, dated 15th July, 1885.

Mr. Ameer Ali, who stood second in the second class in the M.A. Examination in History in the Calcutta University in 1868, wrote an article on the Employment of Muslims in the "Nineteenth Century," 1882.

first to claim separate representation for his community. The name of the gentleman last referred to is Mahomed Yusuf, who delivered in the Bengal Legislative Council, in 1883, one of the most remarkable speeches in reply to Mr. G. C. Paul's opposition to the Local Self-Government Bill.

While men like Rai Bahadur Kristodas Pal, Maharaja Sir Jatindramohan Tagore and Raja Digambar Mitra had opposed the introduction of local self-government in the Calcutta Municipality, Mahomed Yusuf stood forth as a champion of democracy. He said:—"If an opportunity is not afforded, there never will be a beginning. There is no school for education in political matters, where people should first go and qualify themselves in politics in the abstract before you could put them in charge of a district for the purpose of self-government; but if the people are sufficiently advanced and educated in a general way, you may safely entrust them with the duties of self-government, although they may not have had a trial before. To entrust them with such duties is to begin with their political education, which can only be acquired by practice, and not by going to any particular schools."¹

Mahomed Yusuf then claimed separate representation for the Mohammedans. He quoted in

¹ Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, May 3, 1813, p. 58.

support of his argument the 47th paragraph of the Report of the Commissioner of the Presidency Division who had remarked "that the agitators in this matter are Hindus, and that Local Boards, instituted as proposed will be comprised almost entirely of Hindus to the exclusion of Mohammedans." Mahomed Yusuf said :—"The Council will be pleased to remember that though in most places the Mohammedan population forms a minority as compared with the larger bodies of the Hindus, still in many places they form a large proportion of the population. Or it may be that in some places, though fewer, the case is the reverse, and the Hindus form a minority. In such cases, when there is party spirit and angry feeling between the two classes of people, it is necessary to reserve power for the representation of the minority. The Bill proposes to provide for this by nomination, but it would be an advantage and a more fit recognition of the claims of the Mohammedan population if provision could be made in the Bill for the election of Mohammedans by reserving a certain number of membership for that community."¹ It must be observed here that Mahomed Yusuf did not claim separate representation for the Mohammedans only, but for any minority community, be it Hindu or Mohammedan by religion. This speech shows that the claim for separate representation of the Muslim

¹ *Ibid*, p. 65.

community is long anterior to the Morley-Minto Reform Scheme, to which the origin of this claim is generally ascribed.

Mahomed Yusuf's speech is still more remarkable for the advocacy of women's franchise for the first time in an Indian Legislature. He said: "As in the Municipal Bill, so in this, the voters must be of the male sex, and females are purposely excluded. There may be some history attached to the question of female suffrage in other countries, but the matter is worth our serious and unbiassed consideration here. Females are in many cases holders of large Zamindaries, and they manage their own property themselves. It would, therefore, be hard to exclude them from exercising the power of voting in the Self-Government Scheme. The reasons which justify the exclusion of females in other countries do not justify their exclusion in this country. If females were incapable of holding property and managing it, there might be some reason for their exclusion in this Bill. But to say to females, you may hold property in your own right, you may manage it yourself, and you may appoint your servants and managers privately, but you shall not be allowed to do so publicly, passes beyond my humble comprehension. The answer to the position which I take up is that it will open a wide door to fraud. But even in the case of males there is fraud practised, and in order to avoid fraud, it does not

follow that males or females should be excluded altogether, because means could be devised to defeat fraud and prevent the perpetration of it.”¹ It is a great tribute to the democratic spirit of Islam that one of its followers was the first to claim political rights for Indian women.

¹ *Ibid*, p. 66.

CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL THOUGHT OF BANKIMCHANDRA ¹ (1838-1894).

I. Introduction.

In the history of western political thought Machiavelli is regarded as the prophet and preacher of the principles of nationalism and patriotism. In the history of the political thought of modern India Bankimchandra holds a position analogous to that of Machiavelli. Like the great Florentine statesman, Bankimchandra too held patriotism as the first principle of his political philosophy. But Bankimchandra's political philosophy is based on such high ethical conceptions that it would be nothing less than sacrilege to utter his name in the same breath with that of Machiavelli. Moral virtues, according to Machiavelli, are not essential to

¹ Political ideas of Bankimchandra are to be found in the following essays, novels, etc. :—

- (1) A Popular Literature for Bengal, 1870 ; (2) বঙ্গদর্শনের প্রথম সূচনা, ১২৭৯ ; (3) ভারতবর্ষ পরাধীন কেন ? ১২৭৯ ; (4) বঙ্গদেশের কৃষক, ১২৭৯ ; (5) স্বাধীনতা ও পরাধীনতা, ১২৮০ ; (6) সাম্য, ১২৮০, জ্যৈষ্ঠ আষাঢ়, ১২৮২ কার্তিক ; (7) কমলাকান্তের দপ্তর, ১২৮০-৮৩ ; (8) বাঙ্গলার ইতিহাস, ১২৮১ ; (9) বাঙ্গলা শাসনের কল, ১২৮১ ; (10) বাহুবল ও বাক্যবল, ১২৮৪ ; (11) মনুষ্যত্ব কি ? ১২৮৪ ; (12) লোকশিক্ষা, ১২৮৫ ; (13) বাঙ্গলার ইতিহাস সম্বন্ধে কয়েকটি কথা, ১২৮৭ ; (14) বাঙ্গলার ইতিহাসের ভগ্নাংশ, ১২৮৯ ; (15) আনন্দমঠ, ১২৮৯ ; (16) দেবীচৌধুরাণী, ১২৯০ ; (17) ধর্মতত্ত্ব, ১২৯১ হইতে “নবজীবনে” ; (18) কৃষ্ণচরিত্র, ১২৯৩ ।

or conditions of political virtues. Moral judgments are wholly subordinate in Machiavelli's political philosophy to the exigencies of political action and welfare. The whole effect of his point of view is summed up in these dictates of unscrupulous patriotism : " Where the safety of one's country is at stake, there must be no consideration of what is just or unjust, merciful or cruel, glorious or shameful ; on the contrary, everything must be disregarded save that course which will save her life and maintain her independence." In his " Krishna-charitra" and " Dharmatattva" Bankimchandra preached that politics and ethics are one and the same thing. Starting with the natural family affections, he aimed at the ultimate goal of working fellow-feeling into the whole fabric of human society. He advocated patriotism, not because it is good in itself, but because, it is the best way of doing service to the whole world.

With Bankim, the concept of duty is decidedly predominant over the concept of right. He does not lay much stress on the rights of the individual, but insists on the performance of duty, which would secure not only good government but also promote Dharma. We cannot, therefore, gather from his philosophy any definite theory of law and the state.

He had very little faith in government as an agency of promoting general welfare. In removing abuses and effecting social reform he relied on

social sentiment rather than on legal compulsion. A man is free to observe or to violate the dictates of propriety, but he has society at large to face ; even a man of power cannot escape the indictment of social ostracism. Hence, in his attempt to ameliorate the condition of the peasants of Bengal he appealed to the social sentiment of the Zamindars rather than to the government for their legal protection.

According to Bankim, a good people is the foundation of a good government. He seeks, therefore, to inculcate political capacity, political habits, and political morality in the Bengali people. He did not believe in any short cut to political power. So he looked down upon the political agitation, carried on by a few men, educated in the western fashion, through the Press and the platform, with supreme contempt. He realised clearly the unreality of such a political movement. The agitation was carried on mainly in the English language, which was quite unintelligible to the people,¹ the political propaganda was carried on in towns, while the masses lived in villages,² the grim resolve and the spirit of self-sacrifice which are the two essential elements in the struggle for securing good government were entirely lacking in the self-constituted leaders of the people. Over

¹ ' Bangadarshaner Pratham Suchana,' 1872.

² ' Bangadesher Krishak,' Ch. I, Introduction.

and above these, there was a wide gulf of separation between the uneducated masses and the superficially educated classes in ideas, thoughts, feelings and the manner of living.¹ He ridiculed the very idea of carrying on political agitation. Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri is credited with coining the telling phrase that 'a subject nation has no politics.' But long before him Bankimchandra said that a nation which was conquered by seventeen soldiers can have no politics at all. The only politics which is suited to the country is begging. So he observed humorously that politics is a subject fit for cultivation by the title-holders, flatterers, deceivers, beggars and editors.² In another place, he remarked that the educated classes think that to abuse the English anyhow is the highest of politics.³ He was sick of talks and incessant talks of the political agitators. Through the speech of an imaginary bee he instructed the Bengali people to gather honey and to use stings, instead of wasting energy in talks and mere talks.⁴ Bankimchandra had no patience with the virulent and often meaningless attack of the Indian newspapers on the Government. He wrote a brilliant caricature of the type of criticism levelled against the

¹ 'Bangadarshaner Pratham Suchana.'

² 'Kamalakanter Daptar,' Ch. II.

³ *Ibid*, I, Ch. VI.

⁴ *Ibid*, II, Ch. III.

British Indian administration in an article in the 'Bangadarshan,' entitled the "Varsha-Samalo-chana." It is even alleged that he suggested to the Government the suppression or censorship of newspapers, conducted by Indians.¹

This scornful attitude of Bankimchandra towards the contemporary political agitation is solely due to the idealism which he entertained about the national movement. This idealism, coming in contact with the shallow agitation, met with a rude shock. So, with a view to draw the attention of his countrymen to the fundamental problems of national regeneration he poured forth abuses on the agitation conducted through the Press and the platform.

II. *His Method.*

Bankimchandra presented his political philosophy as a part of the philosophy of Dharma, which can be imperfectly translated as Religion.

¹ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Sept. 28, 1873:

"Babu Bankimchandra Chatterjee is reported to have said that much of the general feeling of distrust towards the Government which has often been the subject of comment is due to the action of the native Press"..... Sisirkumar went so far as to attribute a motive to Bankimchandra: "Babu Bankimchandra draws but Rs. 600 per mensem and already his zeal has met with the approbation of His Honour, and it is to be expected that a promotion would increase his zeal tenfold."

He interpreted the Dharma from the Hindu philosophy, in the light of the empirical, utilitarian and positivist philosophy of Bacon, Bentham, Mill and Comte. He was the first graduate of the Calcutta University and as such had the advantage of high education in western literature, history, law and philosophy. He kept the habit of diligent study even in the midst of his busy official career.¹ His writings show that he was thoroughly conversant with the works of Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hume, Laplace, Baine, Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Auguste Comte, Lecky, and Buckle. But none exerted a greater influence on him than John Stuart Mill. Bankimchandra told Srishchandra Majumdar in 1884 that at one time Mill had exerted a very great influence on his mind, but he became free from it later on.²

Along with western philosophy, Bankimchandra made a close study of ancient Indian literature and philosophy. He lived in an age, when the reaction against the wholesale imitation of the western fashion had already begun. The publication of the 'Bangadarshan' (1872) almost synchronises with the preaching of the lofty spiritual ideals of Hindu culture and religion from different angles of vision by

¹ 'Bankim-Prasanga,' p. 216.

² *Ibid*, p. 198.

Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay and Rajnarain Bose. Bankimchandra was not wholly immune from the influence of the prevailing spirit of the Hindu revival. It was this spirit which inspired him to show the superiority of the Hindu ideals over the western ideals. His satires and gibes against the European civilisation were also the outcome of the psychological atmosphere of the time. But he never surrendered himself slavishly to the dictates of the Hindu scriptures. He accepted only that much of the Hindu religion and philosophy, which appeared to him to be reasonable. Hence Rabindranath observes that the real hero of Bankim's "Krishna-Charitra" is not Krishna but the Rationalism of Bankim.¹ It was this blending of reverence for the ancient Indian culture with rationalism which led Bankim to interpret the old Indian ideals in the light of the utilitarian and positivist philosophy. But it must be remembered that though Bankimchandra was influenced by the contemporary English and French philosophy, he was as much critical about it as he was critical of the injunctions of the Shastras.

Utilitarianism, as explained by Bentham and Mill, appealed so strongly to the mind of Bankim that he took infinite trouble to show that Srikrishna, the greatest representative of the Hindu

¹ Rabindranath's *Adhunik Sahitya*.

ideal, was always inspired by the utilitarian motive. But at the same time, he pointed out the shortcomings of the utilitarian philosophy. According to him, the mistake committed by the utilitarians is that they think that the whole of Dharma is contained in Utilitarianism. As a matter of fact it is only a part of Dharma, inasmuch as it seeks to do good to the greatest number and not to all. The essence of Dharma, according to him, is equal regard for all.¹ In his views on the nature of man he differs fundamentally from Bentham. According to Bentham man is fundamentally selfish ; while Bankimchandra recognises compassion as an inherent faculty of man.² Moreover, he held that “ Man is by instinct a poet and an artist. The passionate yearning of the heart for the ideal in beauty, in power and in purity must find an expression in the world of the Real.”³

Bankimchandra was also captivated by the brilliant exposition of the Religion of Humanity by Auguste Comte. He took this as his ideal in his explanation of “ Dramatattva ” and presented a concrete example of it in the character of Krishna. Like Comte, Bankimchandra too maintains that Dharma is the harmonious development of all our physical and mental

¹ Dharmatattva, Ch. 22.

² *Ibid*, Ch. 26.

³ *Ibid*, Ch. 27.

faculties. But the views of the two differ fundamentally in one respect—that is, the attitude towards God. According to Comte, “it is requisite that our minds should conceive a power without us, so superior to ourselves as to command the complete submission of our entire life.”¹ But Bankimchandra conceived God in every animate being. He also rejected the scientific paternalism of Comte’s politics.

From John Stuart Mill, Bankim got that Individualism, which admitted of the necessity of social control in particular cases. It was Mill again who inspired Bankim to look with horror at the tyranny of the majority and to advocate the equal rights of women with men. The theory of ‘unearned increment’ propounded by Mill and the foundation of the Land Tenure Reform Association by him in 1870 probably induced Bankim to wield his pen against the Zamindars on behalf of the poor peasants. But even this political Guru of Bankim could not exact from his disciple an unswerving allegiance. Bankim severely criticised Mill for the latter’s agnostic views on religion.²

¹ Comte’s System of Positive Polity, Vol. II, p. 11 (Harrison’s edition, 1875).

Acharya Krishnakamal Bhattacharya was of opinion that Bankim had not studied Comte’s work thoroughly, ‘Puratan Prasanga’ by Prof. Bipinbihari Gupta, p. 72.

² ‘Bangadarshan,’ 1281 B. S. Essay on ‘Mill, Darwin and Hindu Religion.’

Bankim's views on religion really mark him as an independent thinker and form the very basis of his political philosophy. Bankim wrote : " With other peoples, religion is only a part of life ; there are things religious and there are things lay and secular. To the Hindu his whole life was religion. To other peoples, their relations to God, to the spiritual world, are things sharply distinguished from their relations to man and to the temporal world. To the Hindu, his relations to God and his relations to man, his spiritual life and his temporal life, are incapable of being so distinguished. They form one compact and harmonious whole to separate which into its component parts is to break the entire fabric." ¹

Bankimchandra held the post of a Deputy Magistrate and, as such, he must have often felt himself handicapped in giving expression to his political ideas freely. In reading his essays one cannot avoid thinking that the writer is using a good deal of circumspection in expressing his thought. When asked to contribute some articles in *Mookerjee's Magazine*, he wrote on the 28th December, 1872, to Shambhoochandra Mookherjee : " I won't take up politics, because then I would be sure to rouse the indignation of Anglo-Saxonian

against 'Mookerjee.' That is why Bangadarsan has so little of politics in it."¹

III. Bankimchandra as the High Priest of Nationalism in India.

The two creative forces in the history of Europe in the nineteenth century were Liberalism and Nationalism. The youngmen of Bengal imbibed these two ideals from their study of western history and literature in the first half of the nineteenth century. We have shown in the earlier chapters how the national feeling was expressed in the college debating societies and in newspapers and journals. Then in the sixties of the last century the word 'National' captivated the imagination of Young Bengal. The National Mela (1866) was started, the National Paper (1866) was circulated, and the desire for independence was freely expressed.² In the next decade the

¹ 'Bengal Past and Present,' 1914, April-June, p. 279.

² In the second (1887) National Mela Manomohan Bose said:—

সারল্য আর নিৰ্ম্মলসরতা আমাদের মূলধন, তদ্বিনিময়ে ঐক্য নামা মহাবীজ ক্রয় করিতে আসিয়াছি। সেই বীজ স্বদেশক্ষেত্রে রোপিত হইয়া সমুচিত ষড়্ভাবারি এবং উপযুক্ত উৎসাহ-তাপ প্রাপ্ত হইলেই একটি মনোহর বৃক্ষ উৎপাদন করিবেক। এত মনোহর হইবে যে যখন জাতিগৌরব-রূপ তাহার নব পত্রাবলীর মধ্যে অতি শুভ্র সৌভাগ্য-পুষ্প বিকশিত হইবে, তখন তাহার শোভা ও সৌরভে ভারতভূমি আমোদিত হইতে থাকিবে। তাহার ফলের নাম করিতে এক্ষণে সাহস হয় না,

connotation of the political concept 'Nationalism' was discussed in Bengali newspapers.¹

But Bankimchandra knew that Nationalism was an exotic plant transplanted to the Indian soil from Europe. Neither the vague desire of a few educated men nor the philosophical discussions by the learned people would make it grow and flourish in India. He made a careful analysis of the constituent elements of Nationalism in his essay on "Why is India dependent?" He found two essential ingredients of Nationalism. The first is the close identification of interest of the individual with a particular community. The realisation of this would make it the duty of an individual to promote the welfare of the community. When every one is actuated by such a motive, the different members of the community become one in counsel and opinion and they act together. This is, according to him, the first part of Nationalism but this is only a half. The other half is the differentiation of the interest of the particular

অপর দেশের লোকেরা তাহাকে 'স্বাধীনতা' নাম দিয়া তাহার অমৃতাস্বাদ ভোগ করিয়া থাকে। আমরা সে ফল কখনও দেখি নাই, কেবল জনশ্রুতিতে তাহার অল্পম গুণগ্রামের কথামাত্র শ্রবণ করিয়াছি। কিন্তু আমাদের অবিচলিত অধ্যবসায় থাকিলে সে ফল না হউক, অন্ততঃ 'স্বাধীনতা' নামা মধুর ফলের আশ্বাদনে বঞ্চিত হইব না।—Proceedings of the Swadeshi Mela.

¹ "Bangadarshan," 1284, Jyaishttha, Bharate Ekata. "Arya Darshan," Jyaishttha, 1224, Jatiyata. "National Paper," October 2, 1872.

community from other communities. The welfare of one nation might mean harm to another. In the clash of interests between nations, a nation should be prepared to promote its own interests even by doing harm to other nations. Such a spirit might be good or bad, but it has been proved that the nation, which is inspired by it, acquires supremacy over other nations. Bankim pointed out the unification of modern Italy and Germany to show the effectiveness of the spirit of nationalism.

Bankimchandra then shows that neither of the two elements of Nationalism has ever been present in India. When the Aryans first came to India they had solidarity amongst them indeed, but in course of time as their number increased, they spread themselves in different parts of the vast sub-continent of India and became divided into various states and communities. Difference of territories, of language, of states, and of religion obliterated the sense of unity. There is no unity among the different communities—the Bengalis, Panjabis, Mahrattas, Rajputs, Jats, Hindus and the Mohammedans. Bankim deplors that such is the misfortune of India, that even where the people belong to the same religion, same language, same race, same country, there is no sense of national unity. As illustrations he pointed out the want of unity amongst the Bengalis and the Sikhs. He assigns a special cause to this state of

affairs. According to him, if the different communities live for a long time under one empire, they forget their peculiar distinctiveness. As the waters of different rivers falling into the sea cannot be distinguished from one another, similarly the different nationalities living within an empire lose their distinctive features. They lose their distinctiveness, but do not acquire unity. Such was the case with the nationalities within the Roman empire, and such has happened with the Hindus at present.¹

Moreover, the masses in India have never identified their interests with those of the Government. Political power, according to Bankim, had ever been the monopoly of a particular class—the Kshatriyas.² The subjects in India had never identified their interests with those of the ruling class, and they had never been actuated by a strong desire for maintaining independence. They wanted good government and not independence. Their attitude has been one of indifference towards the governmental power. Whoever might come to power would not give up the land revenue. Then what is the good of fighting for the national king? The ideas of independence and nationalism

¹ Bibidha Prabandha (Basumati edition, Vol. II of Bankim's works), pp. 127-28.

² Bangadesher Krishak, Ch. III.

are new to India and have been taught to the Indians by the English.¹

The other element of Nationalism—the aggressiveness and hatred towards other nations had also been absent in India. This was due to the attitude of the Indians towards God. A Christian considers God to be apart from the world. He is the ruler of the world indeed, but as the Czar of Russia has a distinctive identity from the whole of Russia, so is God to the Christians. The Hindu conception of God is different from it. God according to the Hindus is in everything—he is the “Antaratma” of everything. So devotion to God cannot exist apart from the love of man. To an enlightened Hindu there is no enemy. This high conception peculiar to the Hindus permeated all the strata of the Hindu society. So the Hindu subjects did not consider the people of different nationalities as enemies. Hence, they did not object to subjugation either by the Mohammedans or by the English; rather the Hindus welcomed the English, and handed over the Hindu kingdom to them.²

Thus did Bankimchandra prove how alien the feeling of nationalism is to the Hindu mind. It is curious to observe, in this connection, that two of the greatest nations of Asia, the Indians and

¹ *Bharat-Kalanka*, Vol. II, p. 129.

² *Dharmatattva* (Vol. II), p. 356.

the Chinese, had never realised in the past the importance of nationalism. Liang Chi-Chao in his 'History of Chinese Political Thought' interprets the spirit of the Chinese in exactly the same way as Bankim did interpret the thought of ancient India. "Since civilization began," observes Liang Chi-Chao, "the Chinese people have never considered national government as the highest form of social organisation. Their political thinking has always been in terms of all mankind, with world peace as the final goal, and family and nation as transitional stages in the perfecting of the world order."¹

The chief task of Bankimchandra was to raise nationalism to the dignity of a religion. He was perfectly aware of the fact that nothing can move the heart of Indians so much as religion. So he preached patriotism as the highest religion. The innate feeling of indifference towards nationalism could be overcome only by placing new religious ideals before the people of India. In that masterpiece of poetic philosophy, the "Kamalakanter Daptar," Bankimchandra identified the goddess Durga with Bangabhumi.² In an old Sanskrit verse mother and motherland have been declared to be superior to heaven. Bankimchandra went a step further. He called the motherland the

¹ History of Chinese Political Thought (1930), p. 7.

² Kamalakanter Daptar, Ch. XI, Amar Durgotsav.

mother and the goddess.¹ He exhorted the six crores of Bengali people to plunge boldly into the dark stream of time and to raise the golden image of the Motherland who had drowned herself centuries ago. In the next chapter, entitled, "A song" Bankimchandra bewails the loss of independence in such a pathetic strain that even the most hard-hearted man is moved to tears. These words stirred up the imagination of Young Bengal and converted them into staunch nationalists more effectively than thousands of platform speeches and newspaper articles could have done.²

The concrete image of the motherland was vividly drawn by Bankimchandra in his immortal song, "Bande Mataram." This song was composed several years earlier than 'Anandamath' in which it is incorporated.³ It failed to create any

¹ Sri Aurobindo in his essay on Rishi Bankimchandra observes: "The third and supreme service of Bankim to his nation was that he gave us the vision of our Mother....It is not till the motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion of our mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves doomed nations is born."

² Kamalakanter Daptar, No. 12.

³ Bankim-Prasanga, p. 52.

Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,
thou our heart, thou our soul,
for thou art the life in our body,
in the arm thou art might, O Mother,
in the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith.
It is thy image we raise in every temple.
For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war,
Kamala at play in the lotuses
and Speech, the goddess, giver of all lore,
To thee I bow !
I bow to thee, goddess of wealth, pure and peerless,
richly-watered, richly-fruited, the Mother !
I bow to thee Mother
dark-hued, candid
sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,
the holder of wealth, the lady of plenty
the Mother ! ”

Several important points are to be noted regarding this most notable song. First, Bankimchandra not only stirs up the imagination of his countrymen by the vision of the peerless beauty of the motherland, but also puts vigour in their heart by pointing out her immense strength. It will be seen in the next section how Bankimchandra considers force as the basis of Government and the highest court of appeal in political matters. Secondly, the strength of the mother is derived, not from any particular section of the people, but from the whole body of the population of the country. He draws the picture of a national militia, defending the country. The necessary

corollary from this is that Bankimchandra advocated the vesting of political power in the hands of the masses of the people. From his essays on Equality and the Peasants of Bengal, too, it appears that he was an advocate of democracy. Thirdly, Bankimchandra identifies the individual with the country. The country is described as the life in the body of the inhabitants. The various faculties of men—knowledge, conduct, love and faith—are described as springing from the motherland. If a man be the product of his environment there is no fallacy in the above description. Such an identification between the individual and the community is particularly necessary for India, because India had suffered grievously in the past owing to the lack of such a spirit of identity. Fourthly, he raised patriotism to the dignity of the highest of religions by identifying the motherland with Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. It is to be remembered in this connection that Bankimchandra was not in favour of image-worship.¹ Like Raja Rammohun he held that image-worship is suited to the least advanced of devotees only.² As image-worship could not be rooted out of the country all at once, he gave a new orientation to it by interpreting the goddesses as the motherland. So he sang: “It is thy image we raise in

¹ Dharmatattva, Ch. 20.

² He himself paid homage to images. Bankim-Prasanga, p. 112.

every temple." Bankimchandra not only promoted the spirit of nationalism by this song, but also placed an ideal, to be realised by the national government. That ideal is plenty of wealth for all.

Bankimchandra further developed the idea of nationalism as a religion in his famous novel *Ananda Math*, which has become the Bible of modern Bengali patriotism. Bhavananda, a leader of the Sannyasis, explained to Mahendra, a new recruit, that the new order of monks do not recognise any mother but the mother country. Bankim gives an original interpretation to the image of Goddess Kali. According to him Kali is the symbol of degradation of India. She is black in colour because of the intense misery of the country. She is naked, because India had been denuded of all her wealth. She wears the garland of human skulls because the whole country has become a vast burial ground. She has Siva under her feet to show that the Indians are trampling down their own welfare. He explains the image of Durga as the realisation of the future greatness of India. The mother country would reveal herself as Durga when all the children of the mother country would call her mother. That is to say, the recognition of nationalism as the religion of India is the only way of attaining the status of a national state.

The influence of the *Bande Mataram* song and *Ananda Math* on the history of modern

India has been no less than Rousseau's "Social Contract" on the history of France in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Though Bankimchandra explained nationalism in terms of Bengal only, yet his ideal transcended the petty boundary of provincialism and spread itself throughout India. The paper started by Sri Aurobindo during the Swadeshi agitation was entitled "Bande Mataram." The secret appeals that were issued by the revolutionaries in Bengal began with the phrase: "Om Bande Mataram." Dhingra, who was executed in London in 1909 for murdering Sir Curzon Wylie, died with the words Bande Mataram on his lips. Before his death he said that as a Hindu he felt that a wrong done to his homeland was a sacrilege against the godhead; and that the service to homeland was the service to Sri Krishna. Bepin Chandra Pal took over bodily the whole doctrine of nationalism from Bankimchandra and declared in 1909 that the mother country was a synthesis of all the gods that had been worshipped and still were worshipped by the Hindus.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the influence of Bankim's romantic ideal of nationalism only produced revolutionary activity. Constructive statesmen like Gopal Krishna Gokhale were also affected by such an ideal. The programme of the Servant of India Society was written in the spirit of Bankim's ideal. The programme declared,

“One essential condition of success in this work is that a sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualised. Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side.”

Nationalism has been generally promoted in the European countries by romantic idealism in literature. Bankimchandra, however, thought it desirable to base the principle of nationalism on a philosophical principle. His “Dharmatattva,” which began to appear in the “Navajivan” from 1884, is the outcome of this desire. The Dharma-tattva seems to have been inspired mainly by Comte’s Religion of Humanity, but Bankimchandra introduced some important modifications in Comte’s theory. Like Comte, Bankim too defined Religion as the full harmony of life in all its elements. These elements are, according to both the philosophers, Affection, Intellect and Activity. The Religion of Humanity as well as Bankim’s Dharma strengthens each subordinate element of our nature :—Morally, it restrains without lowering the instincts ; indeed, it ennobles them : intellectually, it expands the power of speculation, especially in the sphere of art : and practically, it disciplines the activity, referring every action to a common end.¹ Both Comte and

¹ Compare Comte’s System of Positive Polity, Vol. II,

Bankim held that the systematic unity or harmony of mind demands the predominance of feelings over thought. But while Comte's religion of positivism, "which has love for its principle, order for its basis, and progress for its end,"¹ is a religion without God, Bankim's Dharma centres round God. With the help of Sandilya's *Bhaktisutra* he explains how all the faculties are to be so directed as to produce devotion to God. But at the same time Bankim maintains that there can be no devotion to God without love for Humanity. For the sake of self-realisation love of Humanity, which is but another name for devotion to God, is to be cultivated.

pp. 58, 65 (Harrison's edition: Longmans, Green, 1875), with the following chapters of Bankim's *Dharmatattva*: V, VI (showing how Dharma ennobles lower instincts); X, XV, XXI, XXVII (showing how activity is to be disciplined by reference to devotion to God and affection for self, family, country, humanity, and lower animals). Bankim's classification of faculties is slightly different from Comte's. Bankim divides faculties into two—physical and mental. And then the mental faculties are subdivided into three—Intellectual, Emotional and Aesthetic. Bankim has thus defined his ideal:—

“জ্ঞানে পাণ্ডিত্য, বিচারে দক্ষতা, কার্যে তৎপরতা, চিন্তে ধর্ম্মাত্মতা এবং সুরসে রসিকতা এই হইলে তবে মানসিক সর্কাজ্ঞান পরিণতি হইবে। আবার তাহার উপরে শারীরিক সর্কাজ্ঞান পরিণতি আছে, অর্থাৎ শরীর বলিষ্ঠ—সুস্থ এবং সর্ববিধ শারীরিক ক্রিয়ায় সুদক্ষ হওয়া চাই।”

¹ Falkenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, Ch. XV.

Bankim's theory of patriotism is based on the love of humanity. God is in every animate being, therefore, the whole living world should be the object of as much love as the individual self. The protection of society is more important than the protection of self, because there can be no welfare for an individual outside the society. The individual and the family are but parts of the society ; so the part may be sacrificed for the sake of the whole. Bankimchandra identifies society with the country, or nation. Each nation ought to protect itself, otherwise a greedy and sinful nation might conquer others. In that case religion and progress would vanish from the world. So it is for the good of humanity that patriotism should be cultivated as a duty. Bankimchandra does not find any contradiction between nationalism and internationalism. Love of humanity or internationalism does not imply that one should allow his country to be ravaged by others. It means equal regard for all. So one should not do harm to others but at the same time should not allow others to injure his self, family and country. If patriotism is cultivated in the spirit of disinterestedness and as an integral part of the duty of man, there will be no conflict between nationalism and internationalism.

In the last chapter of *Dharmatattva* Bankim concluded that ideally the love of all animate beings is the best Dharma. But in consideration of the

imperfect state of human civilisation, patriotism should be considered as the highest religion.¹ It is to be noted in this connection that though Comte assigned a high place to patriotism as the typical form of social feeling,² yet the patriotism he advocated was narrow in scope, inasmuch as the state, according to him is coterminous with the city.³ Bankim, on the other hand, thought of the state always in terms of sixty or seventy million inhabitants. The basic idea of his Dharma is to widen the circle of love and affection. He thought that the whole world is too wide a field to be conceived in terms of love by an individual. So he was contented with the love of the country as the highest ideal. Bosanquet too considers the national state as “the widest organization which has the common experience necessary to found a common life.”⁴ The sum and substance of Bankim’s teaching on nationalism then is that it is necessary for self-realisation of the individual and therefore it is the highest spiritual ideal.

¹ Dharmatattva, Ch. XXVIII:

“ঈশ্বর সৰ্বভূতে আছেন ; এইজন্ত সৰ্বভূতে প্রীতি ভক্তির অন্তর্গত এবং নিত্য প্রয়োজনীয় অংশ। সৰ্বভূতে প্রীতি ব্যতীত ঈশ্বরে ভক্তি নাই, মনুষ্যত্ব নাই, ধর্ম নাই। আত্মপ্রীতি, স্বজনপ্রীতি, স্বদেশপ্রীতি, পশুপ্রীতি, দয়া এই প্রীতির অন্তর্গত। ইহার মধ্যে মনুষ্যের অবস্থা বিবেচনা করিয়া স্বদেশপ্রীতিকেই সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ধর্ম বলা উচিত।”

² System of Positive Polity, Vol. II, p. 304.

³ Ibid, p. 251.

⁴ Bosanquet, The Philosophical Theory of the State, p. 298.

In raising nationalism to the dignity of religion Bankimchandra was but following the trend of European thought, in the nineteenth century. In Europe religion ceased to be the unquestioned basis and source of public law; in its place came nationalism. The "deadly sin in society now becomes anti-nationalism, lack of patriotism; denial of the authority of the nation over men's consciences becomes the great scandal which shakes society at its very base and shuts out the sceptic from human society, as something sinister and incomprehensible." ¹

Being deeply imbued with the pacific ideal of Hinduism, Bankimchandra felt an instinctive horror for aggressive nationalism. He accused European patriotism as being inherently aggressive in character.² He admits, indeed, that the principle of love for the whole world is contained in the theory of the 'greatest good of the greatest number' of the Utilitarians, in the Religion of Humanity of Comte and above all, in the Religion of love of Jesus Christ. But these lofty ideals could not find acceptance in the heart of the Europeans because of the dominance of the Graeco-Roman culture and Jewish religion in the western world. The Greeks and the Romans could never rise

¹ Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East*.
p. 8.

² *Dharmatattva*, Ch. XXIV.

above the conception of patriotism ;¹ and the Jews too were remarkable for their parochial outlook on life. The combined influence of the Graeco-Roman and Jewish inheritance is greater than that of Christianity in modern Europe. So the Europeans have not been able to reconcile nationalism with internationalism.² It must be admitted that here, as on many other occasions, Bankimchandra unjustly accuses European culture. Four years before Bankim had begun his *Dharmatattva*, T. H. Green, the great Idealist Philosopher, in his lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation, reconciled nationalism with internationalism by explaining the true characteristics of an ideally perfect state.

Bankimchandra was deeply interested in the history of the Renaissance in Europe.³ The root of nationalism in the west lies in the Renaissance movement. Bankim must have learnt from the history of the Renaissance that Nationalism flourished in Europe because national languages were fostered, the Holy Scriptures were translated into them, literature and art were encouraged, and because those brilliant eras of the past were recalled in which national qualities and characteristics had

¹ Here Bankim does a grave injustice to the catholic spirit of the Romans who formulated the maxim that by the Law of Nature all men are equal.

² *Dharmatattva*, Ch. XXI.

³ *Mm. Haraprasad Sastri in Bankim-Prasanga*, p. 158.

found expression. He consciously strove to bring about Renaissance in India with a view to promote nationalism.

Bankimchandra, first of all, tried to impart literary grace to the Bengali language. The comprehensive genius of Raja Rammohun Roy had grasped the importance of the national language in creating the national sentiment more than half a century before Bankimchandra. The Raja was one of the first Bengali writers to employ Bengali prose as the vehicle of higher thought. But his prose style could not attain that sweetness which had been achieved in poetry by the Vaishnava poets, and by Kavikankan and Bharatchandra. After the death of the Raja the flood-tide of the English language and literature almost swept away the infant prose literature of Bengal. Akshaykumar Datta and Maharshi Debendranath Tagore made emphatic protests against the negligence of the educated classes towards the vernacular language. Though men like Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan and Rajendralala Mitra conducted monthly and weekly journals in the vernacular, yet the majority of the people, educated in the western fashion, continued to think the Bengali language to be unfit for conveying serious thought. It required the genius of a great literary artist like Bankim to evince the richness and sweetness of the Bengali language.

On the 31st March, 1870, Bankimchandra read a paper entitled, "A Popular Literature

for Bengal" in the Bengal Social Science Association. In that paper he strongly advocated the use of the Bengali language for all purposes.¹

The epoch-making journal *Bangadarshan* did more to make the Bengali language popular with the educated classes than anything else. In the very first number of this journal² Bankimchandra showed the necessity of cultivating the Bengali language as a means of promoting national solidarity. He remarked that the educated class employed the English language exclusively not only for conducting public affairs but also for carrying on conversation and correspondence. He admitted indeed the necessity of using the English

¹ "We Bengalis are strangely apt to forget that it is only through Bengali that the people can be moved. We preach in English and harangue in English and write in English, perfectly forgetful that the great masses, whom it is absolutely necessary to move in order to carry out any great project of social reform, remain stone-deaf to all our eloquence. To me it seems that a single great idea, communicated to the people of Bengal in their own language, circulated among them in the language that alone touches their hearts, vivifying and permeating the conceptions of all ranks, will work out grander results than all that our English speeches and preachings will ever be able to achieve."—Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, 1870.

² *Bangadarshan* Pratham Suchana, Baisakh, 1279 B. S., 1872.

language for exchanging thoughts between the different provinces of India. The common platform in which the Bengalis, Marathis, Tailangis and the Punjabis are to meet must be the English language. But as it is impossible to educate all the people in English, the vernaculars must be cultivated with a view to communicate the thoughts and feelings of the educated classes to the masses.

- A gulf of separation had been created between the educated and the uneducated by the adoption of the English language by the former. Unless and until
- this gulf is bridged over, national progress can never be attained. So long as the thoughts of the educated classes do not find their echo in the heart of the masses, there can be no success in the movement for social uplift. Bankimchandra, therefore,
- stated that one of the chief objects of the 'Bangadarshan' would be to promote harmony and co-operation between the different classes of people.

Bankimchandra was fully aware of the value of history for rousing national consciousness. He wrote several articles in the *Bangadarshan* to show the importance of making diligent researches in the history of the Bengali people.¹ By history he did not mean the dry accounts of kings and governors and of their intrigues, amours and wars.

¹ 'Banglar Itihas'; 'Some Observations on the History of Bengal'; 'Fragments of the History of Bengal'; 'Banglar Kalanka'; 'Bangalir Bahubal'; 'Origin of the Bengali People.'

In his opinion, these accounts as given by Stuart, Marshman, Lethbridge and the Mohammedan chroniclers, do not form even a part of the history of Bengal. By history he means social, religious, cultural and economic history of the Bengali people. He was the first writer to perceive the importance of the sixteenth century in the history of Bengal and to call it the first age of the Renaissance. He exhorted the educated classes to find out the real history of Bengal by sifting the materials carefully. A nation cannot acquire greatness if it is oblivious of its past glory. He thought it a patriotic duty to refute the charges of cowardice and lack of physical prowess of the Bengali people in the past. In his thought-provoking articles on *Banglar Kalanka* and *Bangalir Bahubal* he tried his best to dispel such notions and to infuse a sense of national superiority in the Bengali people.

Bankimchandra's nationalism was based on a lofty spiritual ideal indeed, but it suffered from one cardinal defect. He was intensely provincial in character. He always thought in terms of Bengal alone, and seldom took into consideration the larger problem of promoting Indian nationalism. India is a subcontinent indeed, and there had always existed a large number of states and nationalities in different parts of the country; but in the modern age it is impossible to maintain a separate national state for each province. In this respect Swami

Dayananda may be credited with larger vision than Bankimchandra. But on behalf of Bankimchandra it may be said that the uniformity in social and cultural tradition of the people in a province affords the best material for promoting nationalism. Bankim might have thought of the possibility of establishing a United States of India on the basis of provincial nationalism ; but nowhere does he expressly state that ideal. His famous Bande Mataram song represents Bengal as the image of the mother country and he sings of the potential capacity of the seventy millions of the Bengali people and not of the three hundred millions of Indians.¹

IV. His Views on Physical Force.

While Bankimchandra's theory of nationalism is a highly idealistic one, his views on the basis

¹ The writer of the article on Bankimchandra in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* holds that Bankimchandra's Bande Mataram song "obtained an evil notoriety in the agitation that followed the Partition of Bengal. That Bankimchandra himself foresaw or desired any such use of it, is impossible to believe." S. J. Akshaykumar Datta Gupta in his book named *Bankimchandra*, Chapter XIII, proves by quoting many passages from Bankim's works, that Bankim was not a revolutionary. In the face of these evidences, if the fatherhood of revolutionary movement is to be ascribed to him, he must be credited with Machiavellian skill in hiding the real drift of his writings from the uninitiated general reader.

of government are characterised by materialistic realism. As a disciple of Comte he held force to be the basis of government.¹ Along with the modern sociologists like Gumplowicz, Ratzenhofer, Oppenheimer and Edward Zenks, Bankimchandra maintained that the origin of the state is to be traced to physical force and conquest.² But Bankim goes a step further than the sociologists. According to him, not only has government originated in force but it is also maintained by force.³ T. H. Green, his contemporary English philosopher, came to the conclusion that whatever might be the historical basis of the state, its philosophical basis is will, not force. Bankim, on the other hand, declared force to be all-powerful and the highest court of appeal in this world. He admits indeed the fact that physical force is brute force; but as man is even to-day partially a brute, so physical force is the ultimate support of men. In his *Krishnacharitra* he even went so far as to declare physical force superior to Knowledge, Intellect, Truth and Justice. This assertion,

¹ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, Vol. II, p. 246.

² Bahubal and Bakyabal—*Bangadarshan*, Jyaishta, 1284 B.S.

³ *Ibid*:

রাজ্যমাত্রেই বাহুবলে রাজ্য

শারীরিক বলই অতাপি পৃথিবী শাসন করিতেছে। —“বাক্যলীর বাহুবল।”

according to him, is especially true in the political field.¹

By physical force Bankimchandra did not mean the power of muscles alone. Had powerful physique been the perfect expression of physical force, the Kabulis would have been superior to the Englishmen. When muscular power is coupled with energy, unity, bravery, and perseverance it becomes physical force. Here of course he is thinking of physical force in terms of the nation and not of the individual.

But Bankimchandra was fully conscious of the shortcomings of physical force. He observed that the attainment of physical power does not mean progress. It is only a means to an end. No nation has been able to attain progress simply by physical force. The Tartars who conquered Europe by physical force could not attain much progress in civilisation. But physical power is a necessary condition of progress in the sense that it is a potent means of preservation against those forces which are harmful to progress.²

Then again, Bankimchandra admitted the superiority of public opinion to physical force. The application of physical force is productive of much injury to society while public opinion can achieve without bloodshed the same which physical

¹ *Krishnacharitra*, pp. 137-38.

² *Bangalir Bahubal*.

power secures. Much of the progress in civilisation has been due to public opinion. Besides animality man has got some inherent altruistic motives. Public opinion alone rouses these motives to action. He admits that in our country there is no possibility of using physical force and that under the present circumstances it is inadvisable too. So public opinion is the only means of preventing social tyranny.

In many cases public opinion becomes operative because physical force is behind it. Bankimchandra cites two historical examples in support of this. Charles I of England was overpowered by the physical power of the English people, so his son James II fled away from the country without measuring his strength with the people when he saw the public opinion solidly massed against him. Again, the British Government in India had crushed the popular rising of 1857, but as it is not palatable to measure strength with the subjects, the India Government has learnt to abandon its desired course in the face of grave popular discontent.¹

As Bankimchandra held physical force to be so very important in political affairs, he formulated a theory of physical training both for men and for women. In his *Dharmatattva* he emphasised

¹ Bahubal o Bakyabal.

the necessity of physical culture.¹ The cultivation of intellect and emotion and the pursuit of knowledge is dependent on a good physique. Mental faculties can never be fully developed unless the physical faculties are developed. Moreover, he who has not properly cultivated the physical faculties, cannot protect himself. He who cannot protect himself, cannot practise Dharma without hindrance. Self-protection means, in its wider sense, the protection of one's own country, which is the highest of Dharma according to him. So physical culture is necessary for practising and maintaining Dharma. Bankim, therefore, thinks it the incumbent duty of every one to learn the art of fighting. In the small city states of Greece every one had to learn fighting. In the big states, however, fighting is considered to be the duty of a particular class. Bankim does not like to depend on such a professional army. In ancient India the Kshatriyas, and in mediæval India the Rajputs alone had to fight. The result was that as soon as the Rajputs were defeated, India was subjugated by the Mohammedans. Had every one in India been capable of fighting such a deplorable incident would not have taken place. He further shows the efficacy of national militia by citing the example of Revolutionary France in 1793. While Bismarck was making Germany the foremost

¹ Dharmatattva, Chapter VIII.

military state in Europe by adopting the system of national militia, Bankimchandra was preparing a philosophical defence for training every citizen in the practice of arms.

In his system of physical culture Bankimchandra included the following :—development of muscular power by taking exercise according to the old Indian system ; training in the practice of all kinds of arms ; riding, swimming, wrestling and above all the capacity to bear cold and heat, thirst, hunger and fatigue. This power of endurance can be acquired by taking exercise, by proper training, by the strict regulation of diet and by controlling the passions. He has given a graphic illustration of such an all-round training in his novel *Devichaudhurani*.¹ He does not mention whether *Devichaudhurani* also practised riding. But *Shanti*, a heroine of *Anandamath* is depicted as a very good rider. From the above two illustrations it is not unreasonable to conclude that Bankim chalked out his programme of physical training not only for men but also for women.

Bankimchandra was not a votary of the cult of non-violence, as interpreted by the Buddhists and the Jainas. He showed that without doing violence to others it is impossible for us to live. If one does not kill the serpent or the tiger which is going to attack him, he will be killed by it. Similarly,

¹ *Devichaudhurani*, Ch. CV.

invaders like Alexander, Sultan Mahmud, Attila, Changhiz, Taimur, Nadir Shah, Frederick II and Napoleon deserve to be killed. But violence should be resorted to only in preventing violence. Hence, he does not subscribe entirely to the doctrine that non-violence is the highest virtue.¹ He maintains that at times it becomes the incumbent duty of everyone to fight. As for example, in defence of one's own country he should take up arms. If he does not, he incurs the sin of non-fulfilment of duty.²

Bankimchandra was influenced to a certain extent by the writers of the Anthro-po-geographical school like Buckle. Buckle maintained that the physical weakness of the Indians is due to the influence of climate, soil and food. But Bankim held that these adverse influences are not permanent in character. They might be obviated by the change of diet and social customs. He refused to believe that the fertility of the soil is a cause of physical weakness. Many parts of Europe and America are not less fertile than Bengal and yet the people of those parts are not weak. He is also sceptical about the adverse influence of climate.³ Like Comte he believed that civilisation diminishes the effects of climate.⁴ He contended that there is no

¹ Krishnacharitra, Book VI, Ch. VI.

² Dharmatattva, Ch. XIII.

³ Bangalir Bahubal.

⁴ Comte, System of Positive Polity, p. 377.

natural bar against the attainment of physical power by the Bengali people. The only thing necessary for it is the iron determination of every one of the Bengalis to acquire it.

The force of a nation, however, does not depend on the physical prowess of the higher classes, but on the power of the masses. So Bankim took up the problem of improving the condition of the peasants in all earnestness.

V. His Views on Society and Government.

Bankimchandra anticipated many of the conclusions of the modern sociologists in his opinion on society and government. He was probably led by Herbert Spencer into the confusion between state and government and therefore makes no mention of the state apart from government. Like the modern sociologists he held that society is the more general and basic fact and entity, which embraces in an inclusive manner all forms of corporate activity. Government is but a specific agency of society and it is utilised by society to insure the safety, efficiency and progress of the collective mode of life. But he failed to discover that social life is anterior to human life. He does not make any inquiry as to the origin of society because Herbert Spencer has demonstrated that society has never been made or manufactured but has grown in process of time ;

but in many places he hints at the existence of human life before the formation of society. Bankimchandra's views on society and government have been greatly influenced by Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. He regarded Mill's "Liberty" with the highest respect and took over bodily many of the arguments in his essays and *Dharmatattva*.¹

According to Bankim, society is necessary for the performance of Dharma. So long as human beings have not been united in society, they cannot satisfy anything but the bare physical necessities. No progress is possible in knowledge outside the society. Without the enlargement of the bounds of knowledge right cannot be distinguished from wrong. Where there is no corporate existence, there is no love between man and man, and therefore, no devotion to God. So the fulfilment of Dharma can be expected only in social life.²

But social life brings in its train some evils too. One of these is poverty. In the pre-social stage no one is poor. Everyone is equally entitled to fruits and roots of the forest, to the eatable animals, to the water of the river and to the shelter of the tree. Nobody desires more than what is necessary for the bare maintenance of life ;

¹ In his *Vahubal o Vakyabal*, he observes that Mill's *Liberty* is to many a revealed book.

² *Dharmatattva*, Ch. XXIII.

so no one cares to accumulate those things which are found in abundance. So none is richer than his fellows and none is consequently poorer. Poverty is a relative term ; and the relative affluence of a particular class over others is a product—and a lasting product—of social life. Thus we see that Bankimchandra admitted with Hobbes that life is brutish before the origin of society ; but he refused to believe that life in the pre-social stage was full of strife. He had studied the works of Rousseau carefully. Here he seems to have been carried away by the rosy colour of pre-social life, as depicted by Rousseau ; and he seems to have forgotten that the instinct of acquisition is a primitive instinct.

Another evil of social life, in the opinion of Bankimchandra, is the considerable loss of liberty. A man living in society is subject to the control in some respects of all the individuals belonging to that society. So he cannot do whatever he likes. This is beneficial to social life indeed, but it implies restrictions on the individuals.¹

In spite of these inherent evils of social life, Bankimchandra inculcated the principle of due subordination of the individual to society. Society is our teacher, law-giver and protector. Society is the real government. So everyone should try to be useful to society.² From his study of the past

¹ Vahubal o Vakyabal.

² Dharmatattva, Ch. X.

history of India, and especially of Bengal, he comes to the conclusion that Bengal has always been governed and protected by society and not by government—that is, in the language of Prof. Dewey, by “folkways” and not by “stateways.”¹

It has been already observed that Bankimchandra regarded Government only as an agency of society. But that agency is the most important of all the agencies of society. Man is the source of power. Society as the corporate body of men is also the source of power. One of the chief forces of society is centralised in government. With Herbert Spencer he believed that government, like the nerve-centre, regulates the whole body of social organism.² Government is necessary for the protection of society. Bankimchandra thinks that as it is impossible to carry on administration if everybody becomes governor, so the governmental authority has been vested in one or more persons. He has generally used the term Raja for government as it is the familiar concept for government in India. But the statement just referred to shows that his mental vision was not limited to monarchy alone as the form of government.

He thinks that the organisation of society is like that of the family. As the father is the head

¹ Bankimchandra, *Fragment of the History of Bengal*.

² Vahubal o Vakyabal.

of the family, so the king is the head of the society. The king protects and preserves the social organisation like the father. He is, therefore, entitled to as much respect as the father does command in the family. But Bankim makes a distinction between loyalty and respect to the person of the king. In a republic the particular members are not entitled to respect but the Congress in the U.S.A. and Parliament in Great Britain deserve respect and devotion. Unless the sovereign authority is respected and willingly obeyed by the people, society becomes weak ; because government derives its strength from the support of the people.¹

Out of this distinction between loyalty as an abstract principle and reverence to the person of the king, comes the theory of resistance to the sovereign. A king remains a king only so long as he protects the subjects. He ceases to be a king as soon as he becomes an oppressor of the people. Then he is no longer entitled to devotion ; rather it becomes the duty of citizens to force him to govern well. Despotism of the king is injurious to the interests of society.² In his *Anandamath* he further elucidates this principle. Bhavananda justifies the loot of the revenue by observing that he who does not protect the kingdom is no king at all. The relation between the king and

¹ *Dharmatattva*, Ch. X.

² *Ibid.*

subjects is that of protection and obedience. If the king does not protect, he is not entitled to obedience.¹ Bankim does not care to inquire into the more intricate problem as to who is to decide whether the king is protecting the subjects, or not.

As a disciple of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer Bankimchandra evinced a strong predilection for individual liberty. He admits indeed the right of the sovereign to force one to act against his own inclination; because the sovereign has been established as the final judge of right and wrong and his judgment has been accepted as infallible and therefore he is entitled to curb our passions. But like Mill, Bankim holds that the sovereign ought to curb only those passions, the manifestation of which might be injurious to others. That action which is injurious to the individual self alone ought not to be restrained by government.²

Barker has called Mill "the prophet of an empty liberty and an abstract individual." Like Mill, Bankim too may be said to have "no clear idea of the social whole in whose realisation the false antithesis of 'state' and 'individual' disappears." Bankimchandra, however, recognized the necessity of social coercion in some special exigencies.³

¹ Anandamath, Bk. I, Ch. X.

² Bibidha Prabandha ; compare Mill's Liberty, Ch. IV.

³ Krishnacharitra, Part IV, Ch. III.

VI. *Theory of Equality.*

Bankimchandra was averse to the contemporary political propaganda, because its basic principle was begging. The sole aim of all his writings was to rouse the self-consciousness of the people of Bengal and to uplift their personality. The greatest obstacle to the national regeneration is presented by the lack of unity and solidarity amongst the people of Bengal. He made a heroic effort to remove this evil by preaching the theory of equality. His essays on Samya or Equality were published in the *Bangadarshan* between 1873 and 1875 A.D.¹ In the preface to these essays he says that he has not discussed the problem in the same way as the Europeans do. In discussing the theory of Equality, the European writers on political philosophy generally confined their attention to the problems of civil equality and political equality. Writers of the Socialistic school tackled the problem mainly from the economic point of view. Bankimchandra thought that the solution of the problem of social equality is more urgent than that of any other form of equality. Civil equality ensuring an equal right of all to be protected in

¹ In republishing these essays in the form of a book Bankim admitted that there were some mistakes in them. The views he expressed on the intriguing designs of the ancient Brahmans underwent complete change when he wrote the tenth chapter of the *Dharmatattva*.

respect of person and estate and family relations and to appeal to the courts of law for such protection, has indeed been granted by the British Government in India, but owing to the prevalence of social inequality, this right has not come within the reach of that class which is most in need of it. Political equality would remain an idle dream so long as the people would continue to live divided into water-tight compartments. So Bankimchandra believed social equality to be the very basis of civil and political equality. He deals also with the problem of economic equality, not as an end in itself, but as a means of securing social equality. He is convinced that social equality is impossible apart from the fulfilment of material conditions. The minimum requirement for moral life is that the livelihood of a man and his family be safeguarded. Hence he takes up his pen for writing "Samya" and the "Peasants of Bengal."

Bankimchandra finds the world full of inequalities. There are social inequality, racial inequality, economic inequality and natural inequality. Of these the economic inequality is the most severe. He discards the idea of natural equality of men. Nature has designed men to be unequal. Some are born strong and some weak. Some are born with heavier brain than others and are consequently more intelligent than the rest. Some are born beautiful and some are ugly. These are instances of natural inequality. But there are

many instances of unnatural inequalities. The inequality of status between a Brahman and a Sudra, between an Englishman and an Indian are examples of unnatural inequality.

Prevalence of unnatural inequality is one of the greatest causes of the degradation of a community. India has suffered so long from so many evils mainly because of the wide prevalence of social inequality. In progressive societies unnatural inequality, and specially social inequality, is weeded out by two means : either by the spirit of compromise and influence of precepts, or by revolution. In ancient Rome the social inequality between the Plebeians and Patricians was put an end to by the wonderful spirit of compromise shown by the statesmen of Rome. In France and in the United States of America resort had to be taken to Revolution and civil war to destroy the demon of inequality.

But the precepts of great teachers has done more to spread the ideal of equality than revolution and warfare. Bankimchandra cites the examples of the wonderful influence of Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ and Rousseau. Gautama Buddha was able to raise the position of the Sudras to equality with the Brahmans. The result of this new social solidarity was seen in the astonishing political, cultural and economic progress of India during a millennium. The precepts of Jesus effected the emancipation of slaves and

raised the dignity of the humblest of men. The progress of the modern Europeans may be attributed, amongst many other causes, to the preaching of the ideal of equality of men by Jesus Christ.

In the second chapter of his essay on Samya, Bankimchandra discusses the theory of equality as presented by Rousseau. He criticises Rousseau's theory of economic equality by quoting the opinion of Voltaire, who is said to have characterised it as the philosophy of Satan. Bankimchandra is of opinion that the whole of the French Revolution was but a commentary on Rousseau's work. The French Revolution changed the character of the European civilisation. Bankim maintains that such a stupendous change was possible only because Rousseau preached the philosophy of social equality, which contained, however, only a half-truth.

He attributes the fatherhood of modern socialistic and communistic movements to Rousseau, whose theory of communal ownership of land profoundly influenced Proudhon, Louis Blanc and Cabbe.¹ He mentions the salient features of the

¹ This is not the first time that the socialistic theories were being discussed by the Indian public. The advanced students of the Calcutta University were expected to be familiar with these theories. In the M.A. Examination in History in 1870 the following question was set: "What is the aim of communism? Describe the scheme propounded by Fourier and St. Simon respectively." Calcutta University Calendar, 1870-71. In the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* of 1873 (Saka 1795) a criticism of Sherpur

views of these writers, but refrains from making any criticism of these. He mentions also the name of the 'International' but does not refer to Karl Marx, the father of modern Communism. Karl Marx's 'Capital' had not been translated into English when Bankimchandra wrote his 'Samya.' So, apparently he did not know much about Marxian principles.

He then explains John Stuart Mill's views on hereditary succession to property and comes to the conclusion that the children should inherit only that much of the property of their father as is absolutely necessary for their training and livelihood ; the rest should come under social control. He holds that equitable law regarding succession has not been made anywhere in the world. He predicts that though the socialistic theories are being ridiculed by fools to-day, yet a day would come when these will find general acceptance all over the world. He concludes the second chapter by exhorting the Zamindars to treat their

Vivaran by Harachandra Chaudhury was published. In course of this criticism an account of a sect founded by Tipu Pagla of Letiakanda in Susang Pargana has been given. Tipu Pagla preached the equality of men and exhorted upon his followers not to obey the rich nor to pay rent to the Zamindars. In 1824 the followers of Tipu rose in rebellion, which was ultimately suppressed by the intervention of the Government. The critic remarks that Tipu Pagla might be called the Louis Blanc of Eastern Bengal.

Ryots in the spirit of a brother and of an equal to himself. In fair justice, it must be admitted that the Ryots are the owners of the estate, the proceeds of which are being enjoyed by the Zamindars alone.¹

The concluding part of the second chapter of 'Samya' leaves no doubt on the mind of one that Bankimchandra was at heart a convert to the doctrine of the socialists. His Anandamath and Devichaudhurani, in which the heroes and heroines loot the property of the idle and oppressive rich represent also a crude type of socialistic anarchism. The circumstances under which Bankimchandra was placed prevented him from giving fuller and clearer expression to his socialistic views.²

¹ “যিনি গ্রায়বিরুদ্ধ আইনের দোষে পিতৃসম্পত্তি প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছেন বলিয়া দোদীপ্ত প্রতাপাবিত মহারাজাধিরাজ প্রভৃতি উপাধি ধারণ করেন, তাঁহারও যেন স্মরণ থাকে যে, বঙ্গদেশের কৃষক পরাগ মণ্ডল তাঁহার সমকক্ষ এবং তাঁহার ভ্রাতা। জন্ম দোষগুণের অধীন নহে। তাহার অস্ত্র কোন দোষ নাই। যে সম্পত্তি তিনি একা ভোগ করিতেছেন, পরাগ মণ্ডলও তাহার গ্রায়সম্বত অধিকারী।”

² He was all along conscious of the restrictions imposed on his freedom of opinion by the conditions of service under the Government. He wanted to write a novel depicting the character of the Rani of Jhansi but he gave up that idea for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Government. He told Srishechandra Majumdar—

“আমার ইচ্ছা হয় একবার সে চরিত্র (লক্ষ্মাবাইয়ের) চিত্র করি, কিন্তু এক “আনন্দ মঠেই” সাহেবেরা চটিয়াছে, তা হলে আর রক্ষা থাকবে না।”
—বঙ্কিম-প্রসঙ্গ, পৃষ্ঠা ১২৭।

The third and fourth chapters of 'Samya' are mainly reprints from a part of his essays on the peasants of Bengal. We shall take up the third chapter in our discussion of his views on Economics. The fourth chapter aims at explaining the cause of inequality between the different social classes in India. The whole of this chapter is an adaptation from Buckle's introductory chapters in the "History of Civilisation in England." Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) believes that climate, soil and food influence mankind first of all because they make for the accumulation of wealth, and the accumulation of wealth must precede any high development of knowledge. There must be an intellectual class with ample leisure to devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge. It is the surplus resulting from an excess of production over consumption that makes existence possible for the intellectual class, who do not create the wealth upon which they live.¹ Not only does accumulation of wealth depend on physical causes, but the distribution of wealth also is influenced by them. As soon as the accumulation of wealth has fairly begun, a division into the employers and the employed appears among the population. The price paid for labour depends like that of other things offered in the market upon the action

¹ Buckle's History of Civilisation in England, pp. 30-31.

of the law of supply and demand ; if the supply of labourers is more plentiful than the demand for them wages are bound to be low. Where food is found in abundance and people can subsist on small quantities, the increase in population will be greater than where food is scarce and difficult to secure, and where a great amount is needed to preserve life. It is obvious that in warm and fertile countries food is more abundant than in cold and barren countries. It is, therefore, apparent that there is a greater tendency towards an increase in population in warm countries than in cold. Buckle, therefore, concludes that " there is a strong and constant tendency in hot countries for wages to be low, and in cold countries for them to be high." ¹ Then he applies this broad principle to the interpretation of the history of civilisation in Ireland, India, Egypt, Central America and Peru. Regarding India he says that as rice is the chief food in this country, the population grew rapidly, the caste system appeared and the labouring classes were held in contempt. ²

Bankimchandra applies these principles, with amplifications, to the elucidation of the history of civilisation in India. He also takes the help of the economic principles of Mill to show how the wages of labourers tended to decrease steadily and gradually. According to Mill " wages depend on

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 38-47.

² *Ibid*, pp. 50-58.

the proportion between population and capital. Wages cannot rise but by an increase of the aggregate funds employed in hiring labourers, or a diminution in the number of competitors for hire.”¹ Bankim believes that the increase of population is a natural phenomenon.² This increase can be checked either by emigration or by restricting marriage. Bankim holds that emigration had never been largely resorted to in ancient India, because the heat of the country has destroyed the energy necessary for it. Java and Bali are the only two instances of ancient Indian colonization and for a large and ancient country like India these were certainly not sufficient. As food is easily available here, the people have never voluntarily put a restriction on marriage. So the population began to multiply in abundance, labour became extremely cheap, and the labouring class began to sink rapidly into the most degraded condition. The low wages deprived the labourers of leisure and for want of leisure they could not cultivate learning. The intellectual classes became more and more despotic and oppressive as the labouring classes sank into degradation.

¹ The wages fund theory of Mill has been discarded by the modern economists.

² The net increase of population is not a natural phenomenon, because where the birth-rate is high the death-rate is also high. Moreover, diseases, natural calamities and war diminish the population.

Physical causes, therefore, are responsible for the poverty, ignorance and slavishness of the masses in India.

Bankimchandra adduces some new arguments over and above those given by Buckle to explain why the masses remained contented with their wretched condition. He shows how the Hindu as well as the Buddhist teachers and philosophers taught the people to be indifferent to the material things and be contented with their own lot. In medieval Europe the Church preached the same doctrines but the Renaissance freed the Europeans from the thralldom of such false principles. In India, on the other hand, the teachings of the scriptures have accentuated the tendencies which are natural in the physical condition of the country. So social inequality has been perpetuated in India.

Bankimchandra then shows that the degradation of the labouring classes (*i.e.*, the Sudras according to him) adversely affected the Vaisyas, Kshatriyas and the Brahmans also. The Vaisyas lived on trade and commerce but as the masses did not care to produce a large surplus of goods over bare necessities, and consequently had not the means for paying for foreign goods, trade could not flourish to the same extent as was to be expected from a large and fertile country like India. The masses were poor, lazy and devoid of energy and, therefore, they could not exercise that efficient control over the administrators,

which is essential for securing good government. The Kshatriyas became despotic; they degenerated into voluptuaries. So we find that the strong, dutiful and virtuous kings depicted in the Mahabharata degenerated into the weak, effeminate and sensual kings, pictured in the medieval Sanskrit drama and poetry. Had the people been prosperous they could have criticised the rulers, who out of fear would have remained efficient. In Rome and England the character of government improved owing to the opposition of the plebeians and the commons respectively; on the other hand the Kshatriyas in India became poor and inefficient owing to the enslavement of the Sudras.¹ The Brahmans spread the net of scriptural regulations to enslave the other three Varnas, but like the spiders they themselves were ensnared in their own nets. The mental field of the Brahmans became barren like a desert. The Brahmans, who had once produced the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Paninivyakaran, Samkhya, etc., began to take pride in writing Vasavadatta and Kadambari.

Though Bankim does not directly mention, yet it may be inferred from the trend of his essays on Samya, that the accumulated results of the physical and cultural causes of the glaring inequality among the different classes in India began to be manifested in the middle ages, *i.e.*, in the

¹ “শুদ্ধের দাসত্বে ক্ষত্রিয়ের ধন এবং ধর্মের লোপ হইয়াছিল।”

post-Gupta period. The physical causes, however, must have appeared much earlier. The condition of the Sudras, then, must have been miserable in the pre-Buddhistic age. But modern researches have shown that the caste system had not been so rigid and inelastic in that period, and the Sudras were not as wretched as Bankim would make us believe them to have been. Buckle's generalisation regarding the influence of physical causes on the cultural and economic development of India does not hold good. It is difficult too to accept Bankim's contention that the doctrine of equality preached by Buddha ushered in a millennium of prosperity for India despite the operation of the physical causes. The millennium after Buddha was indeed a glorious age for India, but had the influence of physical causes been paramount how could a simple doctrine of equality obviate the operation of that influence?

The fifth chapter of Samya, dealing with the equality between the two sexes, was published in the "Bangadarshan" in Kartik, 1282 B.S. As the fourth chapter is based mainly on Buckle, so this chapter is based mainly on the 'Subjection of Women' by Mill. Bankim says that the women in all the countries are subject to men, but nowhere in the world has that subjection been carried to such an extent as in India. Like Rammohun, Bankimchandra too pleads for the equal right of inheritance for women and he

repeats the very argument of the Raja to the effect that women are not less intelligent and less reliable in character than men. He takes strong objection to the traditional standard of conduct set down for a wife, which prescribes that a woman should serve her husband, be he never so wicked and licentious. In his "Bishabriksha" and "Krishnakanta's Will" he shows in the character of Suryamukhi and Bhramar that if a husband transfers his affection to any other woman, the wife is justified in cutting off all connection with the husband. Bankim, the disciple of John Stuart Mill, was thus the first to raise the standard of revolt in the cause of women against men in India. In the cross-currents of Indian politics of the present day the question of rights of women is not less important than the communal problems.

In the concluding part of his essays on Samya Bankimchandra takes the view which has been arrived at by the modern psychological school of political philosophy. Anticipating the findings of differential psychology and granting the obvious variations in human ability, Bankimchandra interpreted the term equality to mean equality of opportunity.¹ Such is the view also of

¹ সাম্য নীতির এরূপ ব্যাখ্যা করিও না যে, সকল মনুষ্য সমান-বহুপন্ন হওয়া আবশ্যক বলিয়া স্থির করিতে হইবে। তাহা কখন হইতে পারে না। যেখানে বুদ্ধি, মানসিক শক্তি, শিক্ষা, বল প্রভৃতির স্বাভাবিক তারতম্য আছে, সেখানে অবশ্য অবস্থার তারতম্য ঘটিবে—কেহ স্বকা করিতে পারিবে না। তবে অধিকারের সাম্য আবশ্যক—কাহারও শক্তি

Giddings, Cooley, Hobson, Dewey, Hobhouse, Barnes, Willoughby and A. L. Lowell.

VII. *His Views on Education.*

To Bankimchandra the basic problem of Indian politics was the lack of social solidarity. The whole trend of his series of essays on equality was to show that the different kinds of inequalities prevailing in India from very ancient times have been the cause of so much misery of the people of this country. We have seen that he pleaded for equality of opportunity for all. But he was conscious of the fact that a series of legislative enactments throwing open all the avenues of life to all, irrespective of caste and creed, would not do much to ameliorate the condition of the masses in India. What remedy, then, did he suggest for bringing about the desired goal of social equality? He relied on education as the sovereign remedy for all the evils from which India has been suffering.

But he is careful to explain that by education he does not mean the three R's, nor a mere acquaintance with the rules of grammar and geometry. He understands by education that which trains the mental faculties, imparts skilfulness to the respective avocations of the different classes, and gives encouragement to the performance of

ধাকিলে অধিকার নাই বলিয়া বিমুখ না হয়। সকলের উন্নতির পথ মুক্ত চাহি।—“সাম্যের” উপসংহার।

one's duty.¹ He further elucidates the idea in his *Dharmatattva*, where he says that the true object of education is to develop harmoniously the physical, intellectual, aesthetic and emotional faculties.² This sort of education does not necessarily mean literacy. Bankim points out the example of the illiterate old matrons, many of whom were superior to the educated Babus in point of culture.

In his ' *Krishnacharitra* ' he observes that in ancient India the Brahmans did not neglect to impart such a culture to the women and the masses.³ The *Mahabharata* is the immortal monument to the effort of the ancient Brahmans in the cause of popular education.

He complains that in modern India no one, from Rammohun to the vociferous politicians of his time, has tackled the problem of mass education with right earnestness. There is no bond of sympathy between the educated and the uneducated. The educated people do not care for the well-being of the peasants. They write articles in newspapers and deliver lectures in English not to educate the masses but to get applause from the Englishmen like Fawcett and Sir Ashley Eden. But really the problem of mass education is of such

¹ লোক-শিক্ষা in *Bangadarshan*, Agrahayan, 1285 B.S.

² *Dharmatattva*, Ch. IX.

³ *Krishnacharitra*, Part I, Ch. XI, "Mass Education."

supreme importance that it can no longer be neglected. The census figures revealed that in Bengal (1878) there were sixty-six millions of people. Mere iron serves no useful purpose, but if it is made into a weapon it can break stone. Similarly, says Bankim, these uneducated people are living useless lives; but if they are educated there is nothing in this world which cannot be achieved by them.¹ Education of the peasants and of women would not only solve the political problem of India, but also save the country from economic exploitation. If the women be educated they can earn their own bread and attain equality with men. All the social evils can be removed by popular education alone. He had no faith in education being filtered down from above. He urged the necessity of undertaking the education of masses directly.

Bankimchandra suggests several means for diffusing culture, not necessarily literacy, amongst the people. In the *Dharmatattva* as well as in his essay on “লোক-শিক্ষা,” he suggests the revival of Kathakata or popular exposition of the Epics and the Puranas. Secondly, the educated people should carry the torch of knowledge to the uneducated. They are to explain their ideas in popular lectures and intimate conversation with the uneducated masses in every village. Thirdly, the newspapers should be converted into real organs of popular

¹ লোক-শিক্ষা।

education. Above all, Bankim points out that means of popular education by which Buddha was able to preach his highly ethical and abstruse religion, Sankar was able to triumph over Buddhism, and Chaitanya was able to convert the whole of Orissa to Vaishnavism. Bankimchandra assigns a very high place to the Sannyasi teachers. In every one of his novels, excepting Indira, Bishabriksha and Rajsingha there is a Sannyasi teacher inspiring the heroes and heroines with high ideals.

VIII. Administration of Law and Justice.

Bankimchandra published four essays on the peasants of Bengal in the *Bangadarshan* in 1872 A.D., that is forty years after Raja Rammohun Roy had given his written evidence regarding judicial administration of India. Both Rammohun and Bankim had direct first-hand information regarding the administration of law and justice ; both had been responsible, though subordinate, officials of the Government in India.¹ But both

¹ Bankimchandra preached nationalism indeed, but he did not want immediate withdrawal of British rule from India. His view was that the British rule should continue here, till the masses, and not the educated classes alone, become conscious of their nationhood.

of them made scathing comments on the administration of justice in British India. Some of the suggestions of Rammohun like the introduction of the jury system, Habeas Corpus, codification of law and the appointment of a larger number of Indians to higher judicial posts were, indeed, accepted by the Government and given effect to during the intervening period between Rammohun and Bankimchandra, and yet Bankim had to repeat some of the charges levelled by Rammohun against the British Indian Judicial administration. The strictures which Bankimchandra, the level-headed philosopher, passed against it, have not been surpassed in virulence by any other critic of any other system of administration in the world. He said “courts and brothels are of the same type; unless one is ready to pay for it one can have no admittance to either of these.”¹

His opinion on British Government might be gleaned from the following quotation:—

“আমরা সামাজিক বিপ্লবের অনুমোদক নহি। বিশেষ যে বন্দোবস্ত ইংরাজেরা সত্য প্রতিজ্ঞা করিয়া চিরস্থায়ী করিয়াছেন, তাহার ধ্বংস করিয়া তাঁহারা এই ভারতমণ্ডলে মিথ্যাবাদী বলিয়া পরিচিত হইবেন, এমত কুপরাযশ আমরা ইংরাজদিগকে দিই না। যেদিন ইংরাজের অমঙ্গলাকাজী হইবে, সমাজের অমঙ্গলাকাজী হইবে, সেই দিন সে পরামর্শ দিব।” —বঙ্গদেশের কৃষক, চতুর্থ অধ্যায়।

¹ Peasants of Bengal, Ch. II. See also his satire on the life of an ignorant Deputy Magistrate—Biography of Muchiram Gur.

The burden of Bankimchandra's complaints against the judicial system is that the poor are not protected by law in British India against the oppression of the rich. The courts are open to those only who can afford to pay for the judicial stamp, for pleaders, for entertaining the witnesses, and for the gratification of the peons and clerks of the court.¹ Even if a man stakes his all for securing justice he cannot be sure that justice will be really administered in his case. Bankim is extremely grieved to see that every day the poor Ryots are being most shamelessly and tyrannically oppressed by the Zamindars. He asks, "How is it that in spite of the existence of good laws and judicial courts the Zamindars, who are legally guilty are not punished?.....What kind of law is that by which the weak alone are punished and which is not applicable to the powerful?"²

He points out five cardinal defects which have conspired to defeat the ends of justice. First, the prohibitive expenses of judicial trials. This expensiveness debars the poor peasants from seeking judicial redress for their grievances. The rich Zamindar can harass the poor Ryot by filing a suit against him. The judicial system has become a tool in the hands of the rich to oppress

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, Ch. IV.

the poor. Secondly, the courts are located at a great distance from the villages. The peasants cannot afford and do not dare to leave their hearth and home in order to file a suit against the Gomasta of the Zamindar. The Gomasta has really become the arbiter in cases between peasants and peasants, but there is no redress where he himself is the oppressor. Thirdly, the dilatoriness of the system makes the peasants unwilling to appeal to law. Like Rammohun, Bankimchandra too attributes this delay to the insufficiency of the number of judges and to the complexity of the legal system.¹ Fourthly, the legal system has departed from equity and rationality. He attributes part of the defect to the lack of education of the Indian jury. Fifthly, the judges are not competent. The incompetence is due to the want of familiarity of the English judges with the condition of the country. Though most of the subordinate judges and a few of the superior judges are Indians, yet the system as a whole is dominated by the English judges. The Indian judges have to listen to the dictates of the English judges and to decide cases in such a way that the decision might not be set aside in appeal by the latter.

It should be noted that though Bankim is virulent in his attack on the judicial system in

¹ *Ibid.*

British India, yet he prefers it to the system which prevailed in the Hindu period. He maintains that in the Hindu period the Sudras had practically no legal redress against the Brahmans. There are many non-Brahman judges in British India who decide cases in the first instance. Could the Sudras constitute themselves into Primary Courts in ancient India? Bankim answers this question by saying that we know so little about ancient India that we cannot answer it definitely.¹

*IX. His Views on the Merits and Defects
of the British Indian Administration.*

In his essay on "Independence and Dependence of India," Bankimchandra makes a comparative estimate of the merits and defects of the British Government in India. He says that ancient India was independent in the sense that the kings were Indians and lived in India. Now the monarch lives in England. The interest of distant dependencies is sometimes sacrificed to the interest of the country in which the monarch lives. But on the other hand the despotic

¹ Independence and Dependence of India, *Bangadarsan*, Bhadra, 1280 B.S. (1873).

and licentious character of the monarch in ancient India often entailed great hardship and misery on the people. Now India is ruled from England by the bureaucratic system, and so the personal character of the monarch does not affect the fortune of the Indian people. Bankimchandra wrote a brilliant satire in 1875 in *Bangadarshan* to show how the bureaucratic system resembles a machine.¹ In that satire he exposed the red-tapism of the system and showed how the machine works almost automatically irrespective of the personal merits or defects of the Lieutenant-Governor.

He then shows that the distinction which now exists between an Englishman and an Indian is far less galling than the distinction which existed between the Brahmans and the Sudras. In British India there is one law for the English and the Indians : but in ancient India there were different laws for the Brahmans and the Sudras. An Indian judge cannot decide the case in which an Englishman is involved; but could the Sudras ever decide the case of a Brahman? Dwarkanath Mitra is now a judge of the High Court, where would he have been in the “ Rama-Rajya ? ”

In ancient India the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas enjoyed much power ; in British India

¹ বাঙ্গলা শাসনের কল ।

even the highest classes cannot attain to high position according to their merit. The effect of the deprivation of political power is that we are not learning the art of administration and consequently some of our faculties are not being developed. Rammohun held that the loss of political power has been compensated for by the recognition of the principles of civil liberty in British India. It is significant that Bankim, burning with indignation at the oppression of the Ryots, does not lay stress on civil liberty. According to him, the loss of political power has been compensated for by the introduction of European science and literature. In conclusion he says, that in modern India the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas have been degraded in status while the status of the Sudras has been slightly improved.¹

X. *Government in relation to Social and Economic Activities.*

Raja Rammohun Roy invoked the aid of Government in effecting social reform, because he

¹ *Ibid.* To Bankim happiness of the masses is far more important than independence.

“ যে পীড়িত হয় তাহার পক্ষে স্বজাতির পীড়ন ও ভিন্ন জাতির পীড়ন উভয়ই সমান। স্বজাতীয়ের হস্তে পীড়া কিছু মিষ্ট, পরজাতীয়ের পীড়া কিছু তিক্ত লাগে, এমত বোধ হয় না। ”

believed it to be the function of government to promote the well-being of citizens in all respects. Bankimchandra, the disciple of Mill and Spencer, had very little faith in government as an agency for enriching the personality of citizens. He believed social forces to be much more important than governmental regulations in the reform of society. He did not like to invoke the aid of the legislature to abolish polygamy. He says that the spread of good education alone is sufficient to remove all the social abuses.¹

A sturdy individualist as he was, he did not like to see the government assuming trading functions. He holds that governmental trading is detrimental to the interests of society.² He does not even like to see any interference with trade by government. He calls the policy of economic Protection a great error. He was so much wedded to the theory of Mill that he gave up his nationalistic principle in the economic sphere. Raja Rammohun Roy, on the other hand, had suggested the policy of taxing foreign articles of luxury.

As John Stuart Mill made a departure from the strict individualistic position to invoke the aid of government for the protection of artisans

¹ বহুবিবাহ ।

² Prachin Bharatvarsher Rajniti—Ancient Indian Polity.

against the capitalists, so did Bankimchandra give up his theory to draw the attention of the government to the wretched condition of the peasants of Bengal. The general trend of his argument is that despite their good intentions the British Indian administrators have made mistakes at every step in land legislation ; as these mistakes are responsible for the misery of the peasants it is up to the Government to give all possible redress to them without actually overthrowing the Permanent Settlement. He shows how all the land legislation from the time of Lord Cornwallis to the time of Lord Dalhousie has been in favour of the landlord and against the Ryots.¹ The first and the greatest of all blunders committed by the English was to recognise the farmers of land revenue as the absolute owners of land by the Permanent Settlement. Bankimchandra maintained that the Permanent Settlement ought to have been made with the cultivators, who had been recognised as owners of land from time immemorial. Unlike the Raja, Bankim holds that the Permanent Settlement has been in effect the root of permanent degradation of Bengal. Secondly, like Rammohun, Bankim too points out that the

¹ Bangadesher Krishak, Ch. IV. It is to be noted that land legislation in Ireland by the British Parliament in the first half of the nineteenth century, was of a similar character.

promise which had been given at the time of the Permanent Settlement regarding the making of regulations for the protection of the Ryots was not fulfilled. Bankimchandra further maintains that Act V of 1812 destroyed the last vestiges of the rights of the Ryots by allowing the Zamindars the right to fix any rent they liked. Fourthly, Act XVIII of 1812 gave the right of the Zamindars to eject the permanent tenants from their ancestral property. The first Act on behalf of the Ryots was passed in 1859 during the administration of Lord Canning.

Bankimchandra gives credit to the Government for giving up the direct ownership of land and the right of increasing the land revenue, but he finds fault with its policy of interfering with the distribution of wealth. As a result of the Permanent Settlement, wealth has been concentrated in the hands of the few Zamindars to the detriment of the interest of the vast masses of peasantry. He adds that wealth is like cowdung, which being heaped together produces nothing but a bad odour and proves injurious to health : on the other hand if it is scattered all over the field it makes the land fertile. Had there been no Permanent Settlement with the Zamindars, the sixty million peasants of Bengal would have been able to develop their prospects and personality. In that case, the political agitation would have taken the form of a deafening noise like the roaring of the sea instead

of the mild whisperings of five or six Babus in the British Indian Association.¹

¹ *Bangadesher Krishak*, Ch. IV, 1279 B.S. Falgun. *Bangadarshan*, 1874.

In republishing his essays on the Peasants of Bengal, Bankim claims that the improvement which has been effected in the status of peasants is due to his writing. But if we compare his essays with Pearychand Mitra's article in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. VI, 1846, we find Bankim merely repeating many of the ideas of Pearychand.

APPENDIX I

*Extracts from the petition of Members of the British Indian Association and other Native Inhabitants of the Bengal Presidency, complaining for grievances and praying for relief. 1852.**

To—The Right Honourable the Lord Spiritual and Temporal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the Members of the British Indian Association and other Native Inhabitants of the Bengal Presidency, Sheweth,

That your Petitioners are desirous of bringing to the notice of your Right honourable House the sentiments entertained by themselves and the

Loyalty. most intelligent part of their native fellow-subjects all over the country on those points which, in their humble opinion, ought to be taken into consideration at the period of the termination of the Charter, granted to the East India Company by the Act passed in the reign of His late Majesty King William the Fourth, intituled, “ An Act for effecting an Arrangement with the East India Company and for the better Government of His Majesty’s Indian Territories, till the 30th day of April 1854.” As subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, the natives of this country entertain the deepest sentiments of loyalty and fidelity to Her Majesty, and sincerely desire the permanence of the British supremacy in India, which has ensured to them freedom from foreign incursions and intestine dissensions,

* Reprinted from the third Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index thereto, Session 1852-53.

and security from spoliation by lawless power. Placed by the wisdom of Parliament, for a limited time and on certain conditions, under the administration of the East India Company, they have enjoyed the blessings of an improved form of government, and received many of the advantages incidental to their connexion with one of the greatest and most prosperous nations. They are impressed with a sense of the value and importance of these and similar benefits, and of their obligations to the nation from which they have, under Providence, derived them. They cannot but feel, however, that they have not profited by their connexion with Great Britain, to the extent which they had a right to look for. Under the influence of such a feeling, they regarded with deep interest the inquiries conducted by Committees of both Houses of Parliament, between the years 1831 and 1833, preparatory to the passing of the last Charter Act. The fact of such inquiries being on foot, suggestive as it was of great administrative reforms, induced the people, who were unaccustomed to make any demonstration of their sentiments respecting the acts and measures of their rulers to wait the result of the deliberations of the Imperial Parliament.

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10. That the union of political or executive power with the legislative is not only anomalous in itself, but pregnant with injury to the interest of the people. It prevents sufficient attention being paid to the internal administration, so that the most important measures which are pressed on the attention of the Government, either receive a superficial consideration or are postponed for indefinite periods. On the other hand, the interests of the Government, or considerations connected with the Court of Directors or the objects of

Legislative Council.

their patronage, are attended to as matters of primary importance, to the neglect or prejudice of the interests of the people, who have no direct mode of representing their sentiments to their rulers, and no reason to be satisfied that their representations will produce their due effect. Your Petitioners therefore submit that the Legislature of India should be a body not only distinct from the persons in whom the political and executive powers are vested, but also possessing a popular character so as in some respects to represent the sentiments of the people and to be so looked upon by them.

11. That it is a most unprecedented circumstance that

Laws are now made
by the Executive.

though the natives of India have, for the best part of a century, been subjects of the Crown of Great Britain they have not, to this day, been admitted to the smallest share in the administration of the affairs of their country, but have continued under a Government that unites in itself the legislative and executive functions, and avails itself of those powers to make such laws as may subserve its own financial purposes, often without reference to the interests and wishes of the people. It is known to your Right Honourable House that, from the commencement of that Government, the power of making laws and raising taxes has been exclusively in the hands of the Governor-General in Council, appointed by the Court of Directors, and that, till within a few years, the people knew nothing of the intention to pass laws till after they had been passed and translation sent to the courts in the interior and that though at present it is the practice to publish drafts of intended laws, yet as there are no organized bodies to take their provisions into consideration, such publication is in almost all cases wholly insufficient. Moreover the deliberations of the Legislature are carried on

with closed doors, and the people have no opportunity, either of learning the grounds on which the laws are enacted, or of being heard by counsel when desirous of submitting their remonstrances.

12. That not only are laws enacted without reference to the people, but they are enforced against the strongest complaints and remonstrances. Thus

No attention paid to remonstrances. in violation of the pledge given by the Regulation XIX of 1793, "That

the claims of the public (meaning the Government) on their lands, provided they register the grants as required, shall be tried in the Courts of Judicature, that no such exempted lands may be adjudged to the payment of revenue until the titles of the proprietor shall have been adjudged invalid by a final judicial decree," a new species of court was created by the Regulation III of 1828, which was presided over by the collectors of revenue, officers who were in every respect unqualified for the judicial office, but whose orders, when confirmed by one or more of the special commissioners, another special tribunal at the same time erected, were declared to be final, contrary to the meaning and intent of the 21st section of 21st Geo. 3, c. 70. But though several petitions were at the time presented to the Government from several parts of the country, complaining of the innovation, as well as of the hardship of the resumption proceedings which were carried on under the orders of the Government, no attention was paid to them, nor was any explanation vouchsafed as to the grounds of the law or the justice of the proceedings. From the Appendix to the Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, printed in 1832, your petitioners find that the Government, in reporting on the subject on the 23rd February, 1830

to the Court of Directors, "to whom alone," as they state, "they felt it incumbent on them fully to explain the grounds of their proceedings," remarked, "that to object to the inquiry and award of a collector on the ground that he is a Government officer, and must therefore be a partial judge, was a mere prejudice." The Court of Directors, in their reply of the 28th September, 1831, your petitioners find, informed the Government that, after full consideration, they had "come to the conclusion that collectors should not be the judges in resumption questions;" but they gave no orders to rescind the objectionable law. From these facts, which are especially alluded to, because the proceedings of the authorities therein have been published, it will be apparent to your Right Honourable House that even the power given to the Court of Directors to disallow laws passed by the Government, is inefficacious even as regards such laws as are contrary to all sound rules of policy.

13. That as a further example of the inattention of the Government to remonstrances, even when violating (to use the terms of the Charter Act of 1813,) "the principles of the British Government on which the natives of India have hitherto relied for the free exercise of their religion," your petitioners refer to the Act XXI of 1850, which, under the guise of extending the principle of section 9, Regulation VII of 1832 of the Bengal Code to the other presidencies, the provisions of which had never come into operation, alters the rules of inheritance of the people of this country, which are well known to be based upon their religious tenets, by allowing persons excluded from caste, whether on account of immoral or infamous conduct, or of change of religion, to inherit, contrary to the express rules of the Hindoo law. On learning the intentions of the Government, many of the people of Bengal and Madras united to remonstrate against it, on

the ground of the guarantee given them that their laws and customs should be respected, and of its being the tendency if not the design of the intended law to facilitate proselytism to other religions. But these remonstrances were not even noticed by the Government, although sound policy and pledges given to the people required that alteration should be made in the rules of inheritance without their consent, especially when it could not be asserted that any public inconvenience had attended the operation of those rules.

14. That for these and other reasons too numerous to be detailed, your petitioners consider the power of making laws and raising taxes conferred exclusively on the Governor-General in Council, to be impolitic as well as unjust to the native subjects of the British Crown, even with the reservation of the power of disallowing laws made by them, which has been vested by the Charter Act in the Court of Directors. Hence they are desirous that the legislature of British India be placed on the footing of those enjoyed by most of the colonies of Her Majesty, and that legislation be carried on with open doors, so that the people may have full knowledge of the proceedings, and an assurance that their wants and interests will not fail to be cared for. They accordingly submit, for the consideration of your Right Honourable House, the propriety of constituting a Legislative Council at Calcutta, composed of 17 members, three selected from among the most respectable and qualified native inhabitants of each presidency, to represent the natives thereof; one member appointed by the Governor of each presidency from among the senior civil officers on its establishment, to represent the interests of the Government; and one member appointed by the Crown, in the same manner as the

fourth ordinary member of Council is now appointed, who shall be a man of legal education, and preside over the Council. The members of the Council should continue in office for five years, during which time they should hold no other office under Government. To ensure their acting independently of the influence of the Government, they should not be removable even by the Crown, as under section 74 of the Charter Act, the servants of the Company are removable at will by the Crown; but any member who may be accused of misconduct may be liable to prosecution in the criminal court. The members should receive, during their continuance in office, honorary distinctions, such as are given to members of legislative bodies in Great Britain and the colonies, besides a reasonable salary. Until the people are considered qualified to exercise the right of electing their own delegates to the Legislative Council, the native members may be nominated by the Governor-General, in communication with the Governors of the several presidencies; but certain rules may, at the same time, be framed, by which the people of any presidency or province may have the power of objecting on specified grounds to any appointment so made, for which purpose the appointments should be notified in the English and vernacular gazettes of the presidencies. The law commission,

Abolition of Law
Commission.

which was established by sections 53, 54 and 55 of the Charter Act should be abolished, as the purposes for which it was appointed will be fulfilled by a Legislative Council formed on the comprehensive basis herein suggested.

15. That in the event of the formation of a Legislative Council, distinct from and independent of the executive, being approved by your Right Honourable House, your petitioners submit that that body should have

Powers of the Legislative Council and the Supreme Council.

the same powers in regard to the proposing, making and cancelling of laws as are now vested in the Governor-General and the four ordinary members of Council, but that the laws framed by them should be submitted to the Supreme Government for confirmation. The Governor-General in Council and the Governors of the presidencies, as well as any portion of the people by petition, should have the power of proposing drafts of laws to the Legislative Council, in the manner and on the conditions prescribed with respect to Governors, by section 66 of the Charter Act, that is to say that the authorities named may propose drafts or projects of laws, with their reasons for proposing the same, and that the Legislative Council shall take the same and such reasons into consideration, and communicate their resolutions thereon to the authorities by whom the same shall have been proposed. The laws which may be framed by the Legislative Council should be submitted to the Supreme Council, with all the documents on which they may be based, or which may elucidate their object and tendency, and should receive the early attention of that Council; and as all the preliminary inquiries will have been made by the Legislative Council, and great weight will be due to their opinions as representing the interests of the whole community, it will not be improper to require that the Governor-General in Council should communicate his sentiments thereon, within three months from the time they are submitted to him, or that on the lapse of that period his concurrence should be implied, except in the case of his previously informing the Legislative Council of his inability to come to a conclusion within that period. Whenever the laws so framed and submitted are disallowed by the Governor-General in Council the grounds of disallowance are to be communicated to the Legislative Council, and that body are to have liberty to move the Imperial Parliament to pass the laws in question.

16. That the power conferred on the Court of Directors by section 44 of the Charter Act, to rescind any laws passed by the present Legislative Council, is inconsistent with the independence and dignity of a legislative body. Your petitioners submit that such power should in any case be taken away, and that the laws framed by the Legislative Council and approved by the Supreme Council on the plan above suggested, should not be liable to repeal or alteration, save by the paramount authority of Parliament. But if any Bill be brought in Parliament to repeal any act of the Legislature of India, or make a new law on any point affecting the inhabitants of India, 12 months' notice thereof should be given, to allow the Legislative Council, or any portion of the people, to take measures for being heard by counsel, at the bar of both Houses, on the subject of the Bill.

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20. That all improvements in the administration, however urgently called for, are now postponed, on the ground of insufficiency of resources. It is also generally admitted, by all persons qualified to judge of the subject that the higher offices in India are too highly paid, but the lower ones very inadequately. Your petitioners submit therefore, without raising any question as to the method in which the revenues of the country are applied although such question is not unworthy the attention of your Right Honourable House, that there should be a reduction of the salaries of the higher offices, and that the saving thereby effected should, in part, be applied to the increase of the allowances of the lower, which are confessedly inadequate to their duties and responsibilities, and, in part, to those improvements which the condition of the country has long demanded at the hands of its

Economy in the
Public Service.

rulers. The salaries of the Governor-General, the members of Council, the local Governors, and the principal covenanted officers, are on an exorbitant scale, and susceptible of great reduction without impairing the efficiency of the service. The Governor-general in addition to his munificent salary, has all his travelling expenses to an enormous amount, paid out of the public treasury, without control or responsibility. Such a state of things may fairly be thought to operate as an inducement to the individual holding the office to leave the seat of government without sufficient reason. It seems, therefore, expedient that the Governor-General should not have his travelling expenses paid out of the treasury, without limit or restriction, but according to fixed rules, and that such allowances should be granted only when it may appear, from a resolution of the members of Council, that his presence is required by the exigencies of the state at a distance from the seat of Government. Much public treasure is also expended, without any corresponding advantage, in paying extravagant salaries to Residents in the courts of the Princes of India and other political officers, and to a large staff of assistants, and in granting large allowances to those officers for keeping a table, and other useless purposes. As the inhabitants of the country who contribute towards the revenue which is thus lavishly expended derive no benefit therefrom, it is just and proper that the opportunity should be taken to introduce an unsparing economy in these and other branches of the public services, and to apply the proceeds to those public works which may promote free intercourse between distant places, and facilitate the transport of merchandise to the farthest extremities of the British dominions.

26. That the criminal courts of the Company are

Criminal Courts. those of the magistrates and the sessions judges. The former act in

the double capacity of superintendents of police and judges of cases not liable to a sentence exceeding three years' imprisonment. In the former capacity they have been acknowledged by their superiors to have a strong leaning towards the conviction of those who are brought before them for trial. In the latter capacity they are authorised, in certain cases, even to adjudge imprisonment and fine without appeal, and in general they exercise, according to the admissions of high authorities, powers which are not committed to magistrates in any civilized country, and for which they are disqualified by their youth and inexperience.

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31. That the monopoly of the salt trade by the

Monopolies. Company injuriously affects the poor, particularly those who inhabit the districts where only that manufac-

ture can be advantageously carried on, as it interferes with their freedom of action and prevents saline lands, which are unfit for cultivation, from being appropriated by the owners to the manufacture of salt. Even the zemindars of such places are liable to severe fines, if unauthorised manufactures of salt are discovered on their estates, though unknown to them, so that they are compelled to act as revenue guards. A single zemindar has been known to be fined as much as 12,000 rupees at once. The selling price of salt is arbitrarily fixed by the Government, and is at all times so high that, though the country has abundant resources for the manufacture of the article, English merchants can afford to import it. The dearness of the article induces even those who live near the salt manufactures to use earth scraped from salt

lands, while those who reside in the interior have recourse to the alkali found in the ashes of burnt vegetables. The officers employed in the salt department are vested with judicial powers, contrary to all principles of justice and policy, and necessarily employ them very irregularly and vexatiously. The subordinate officers are furnished with opportunities, on pretence of preventing smuggling, of harassing the carriers of salt and the refiners of saltpetre. Your petitioners are of opinion that, among other reforms required in this department, it is desirable that the Government, if they cannot immediately afford to forego so odious a source of revenue, should fix an unvarying rate of impost on the manufacture of salt, say 200 rupees on every hundred maunds whereby not only the poor will be greatly benefited, but the laws will be rid of the anomaly of judicial excisemen and the traders of the harassment caused by the subordinate officers of salt chowkees. But as salt is a necessary of life, the duty on salt should be entirely taken off as soon as possible. The monopoly of the opium trade is not injurious to the country, so far as regards the revenue realised by the Government, as the monopoly price is ultimately paid by the consumers in China. But it is a source of vexation to the cultivators, who are compelled to cultivate the poppy, and supply the produce to the Government, at the valuation fixed by their own officers. Nor can it be otherwise than that the cultivators should be at a disadvantage, and be liable to oppression, when the other contracting party is armed with all the power and resources of the state. Justice, therefore, requires that the interference of the Government with the cultivation should cease, and that the revenue derived from the drug should be in the shape of fixed duties on manufacture and exportation, but principally on the latter as is in some measure the case with regard to Malwa opium. By the

adoption of this principle, the cultivators will possess that freedom of action which all men possess under governments that are not constituted on arbitrary and despotic principles; and whatever is lost by such an arrangement, will be more than made up by the saving that will ensue from the abolition of the expensive establishments which are now necessary.

32. That the abkaree duties, or revenue raised from the sale of spirituous liquors and intoxicating drugs, and the stamp duties, levied by obliging litigants and complainants to write their petitions on stamped papers, are highly objectionable in principle. The former are levied on the opening of shops for the retail of the means of intoxication, and tend to encourage the consumption of liquors and drugs by the lower classes, and the increase of all the pernicious consequences that result from it. The Government, by appointing commissioners of abkaree and a host of ambulent subordinates, termed superintendents of abkaree, whose zeal for the interests of their masters is measured by the amount of revenue yielded by their respective divisions, have, of late, largely contributed to the deterioration of the moral and industrial character of a portion of the population. Measures so pernicious cannot be too severely condemned or too soon discontinued even though a large revenue were to be derived therefrom than is really the case. The legitimate purposes for which duties are imposed on the sale of liquors and drugs, will be sufficiently answered by imposing them on manufacture or exportation. The stamp laws, by which the other class of duties is imposed, also require material revision. The use of stamps in judicial matters does not answer the object for which they are avowedly imposed, namely, the diminution of litigation. On the contrary, they contribute to prolong litigation, as they involve on the courts, from the lowest to the highest, the duty of deciding points

extraneous to the merits of the suits before them. For the purpose of the stamp revenue, every suit has to be valued according to certain rules laid down by the legislature, the application of which is liable to much doubt and uncertainty. Hence questions are frequently raised as to the observance of those rules, and the decisions of the Courts of First Instance are subject to appeals to the higher tribunals ; and many suits are nonsuited or remanded for retrial, merely because the amount of the stamp has not been correctly estimated, however honestly the plaintiff may have formed that estimate. In some cases, when the plaintiffs would willingly forego a portion of his claim, which may not stand on so clear a foundation as the rest, he is afraid to do so, lest his suit be altogether defeated by the objection that he has undervalued his claim, and that his stamp is therefore defective. The decisions of the Superior Court in the matter of stamps are not unvarying, and many constructions and circulars are issued to regulate the questions which arise, which are often modified or rescinded, circumstances which greatly distract and embarrass pleaders and judges in deciding such questions. And it may be fairly stated that not less than 10 per cent. of the decisions of the Company's courts turn entirely on considerations connected with this most absurd and injudicious system of raising a revenue. The operation of the stamp laws is still more directly injurious to the poorer classes in their pursuit of justice. Before they can prosecute a suit of any kind, they must not only incur the ordinary expenses of other courts, but also lay out, at the very outset, a certain sum in the purchase of a stamped paper, which in the most trifling case is a rupee, or eight times the daily hire of a labourer. Your Petitioners submit that laws of this description should not be permitted to exist. If a revenue from judicial proceedings be necessary, it may, with

propriety, be drawn from those who maintain vexation or groundless claims, or resist just ones, by imposing on them fines calculated on the scale of the present stamp law.

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36. That the provisions in section 89 and other sections of the Charter Act, for providing Ecclesiastical establishments, an ecclesiastical establishment expressly for the advantage of British subjects, are out of place among the arrangements for the government of British India. That government is for a mixed community the members of which are of various and opposite sects, and the majority is composed of Hindus and Mahomedans. It is therefore manifestly inexpedient that the Government should have any connection with the appointment of the ministers of any religion. All sects should accordingly be left to support the ministers of their respective religions in the manner they deem most suitable. Your Petitioners do not object to the appointment of chaplains to the European regiments that are sent out to this country, as is done in the United Kingdom, nor to the appointment of a chaplain-general in each presidency for the government of the chaplains, but to support of bishops and other highly paid functionaries, out of the general revenues of the country, for the benefit of a small body of British subjects. They submit, accordingly, for the consideration of your Right Honourable House, the expediency of discontinuing the connection of the Government with the ecclesiastical establishment ; and in order that this may be done at an early date, they suggest that the cost of these establishments be charged to those civil and military servants at each presidency town or station who enjoy the benefit thereof ; and that an increase be made to the allowances of those servants to enable them to meet the additional expense imposed on them by this arrangement, but

without being continued to their successors, who should be left to bear this expense among others incidental to their position in this country.

Your Petitioners, having thus briefly enumerated the points which they deem worthy of the consideration of your Right Honourable House, in connection with the Charter of the East India Company, now on the eve of expiry, and which, so far as they depend on questions of fact, they are prepared to support by evidence whenever required, humbly pray that your Right Honourable House will be pleased to make such arrangements for the government of British India, as to your wisdom and justice may seem fit.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

APPENDIX II

The Indian League.

The following account from the 'Sadharani' shows the first symptom of the breakdown of "the Indian League."

"বাবু শিশিরকুমার ঘোষ যখন প্রথম সভা সংস্থাপন করেন, তখন তাঁহার ও তাঁহার সতীর্থদিগের অভিপ্রায়ানুসারে ৩৮ ব্যক্তি কার্য-নির্বাহক সমিতির সভ্য নিযুক্ত হন। সভার নিয়মিত প্রথম অধিবেশনের দিনে বাবু হুর্গামোহন দাস, ভৈরবচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, জয়গোপাল সেন, বেণীমাধব বসু, সভাপতির অনুরূপিত কর্তৃত্ব গ্রহণেচ্ছা প্রবল দেখিয়া সভার সংস্রব পরিত্যাগ করেন। এতদ্বিন্ন বাবু অন্নদাপ্রসাদ রায়, সুরেন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, এবং নরেন্দ্রনাথ সেনও সদস্যের পদ পরিত্যাগ করিতে বাধ্য হইয়াছিলেন। সম্প্রতি শ্রীযুক্ত মনোমোহন ঘোষ, আনন্দমোহন বসু, বামাচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, প্রসাদদাস মল্লিক, নবগোপাল মিত্র, মনোমোহন বসু, বরদাচরণ মিত্র চারিটি গুরুতর কারণ প্রদর্শন করিয়া সভার সংস্রব ত্যাগ করিয়াছেন।"—সাধারনী, ২রা জানুয়ারী, ১৮৭৬।

Pandit Sivanath Sastri in his Autobiography gives the following account of the origin of the Indian League: ...Since the return of Mr. Anandamohan Bose from England Pandit Sastri, Surendranath Banerjea and Anandamohan Bose had been thinking of founding a political association for the middle class people. When they had come to a decision about founding such an association they took Sisirkumar Ghosh and Manomohan Ghosh into their confidence. Vidyasagar had warned Pandit Sastri against the inclusion in the Association of the Amrita Bazar party. When it was decided to found the Association, Sisirkumar's party asked as to who would be the Secretary. Manomohan Ghosh, Surendranath and Anandamohan had not given any thought to it ; so they replied that the Secretary would be elected according to the

opinion of the members. The notice of the meeting for organising the Indian Association was then published. One or two days after the publication of this notice suddenly a notice about the holding of a meeting to establish a political association of the middle class called the Indian League appeared in the newspapers. On enquiry it was learnt that the Indian League was being founded with Rev. Krishnamohan Banerjee as President and Sisirkumar as Secretary. Pandit Sastri and his friends became astounded, because Sisirkumar had been in their confidence from the very beginning. But they did not give up the idea of founding the Indian Association. Pandit Sastri could not remember whether the Indian League or the Indian Association was founded earlier. (Autobiography of Sivanath Sastri in Bengali, 2nd edition, pp. 227-228.)

Surendranath Banerjee in his Autobiography entitled " Nation in Making " writes that the Indian Association was founded on July 26, 1876 ; and that Kalichurn Banerjee opposed its foundation in its inaugural meeting chiefly on the ground that a similar Association, under the name of the Indian League, had been established a few months before. He further writes : " The Indian League did useful work. Babu Sisirkumar Ghose of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, Dr. Sambhoochunder Mookerjee of the Rais and Rayyat, and Babu Motilal Ghose were its moving spirits. It has ceased to exist and some of its leading members have joined the Indian Association " (pp. 41-42).

It is extremely painful on my part to contradict the statements of Pandit Sastri, whom I regard as an apostle of truth. He wrote his Autobiography in his extreme old age and S. Satis Chandra Chakravarti, the editor of its second edition, admits that the author's memory was failing when he wrote the book. S. Chakravarti corrected a few dates, etc., of the book with the help of the author's son. Still there exist glaring mistakes regarding the Indian

League and the Indian Association. In my humble opinion Pandit Sastri committed the following mistakes :—

(1) He says that the idea of founding a political association first occurred to him and to Surendranath Banerjea and Anandamohan Bose after the return of Mr. Bose from England. Mr. Bose returned from England in 1874. We have shown that as early as 1870 a Dacca correspondent of the *Patrika* suggested the foundation of political association for the middle class. We have further shown that in 1872 the Ghosh brothers took a leading part in founding district political associations.

(2) He states that Sisirkumar founded the rival association and also became its Secretary. But as a matter of fact he never became the Secretary of the Indian League.

(3) He could not remember as to whether the League or the Association was organised first, yet he wrote that the notice of the inaugural meeting of the association was circulated one or two days before that of the Indian League. As a matter of fact the Indian League was founded in September, 1875, while the Indian Association was established in July, 1876.

(4) He writes that Surendranath Banerjea became the Assistant Secretary of the Indian Association (p. 229) but Surendranath himself writes “ Mr. Anandamohan Bose was elected Secretary, Babu Akshoykumar (*sic*) Sirkar, who has since made a name for himself as a Bengali writer, was appointed Assistant Secretary. I held no office, but I was one of the most active members of the Association.”—*A Nation in Making*, p. 42. This is a positive proof of the failure of memory of Pandit Sastri.

Surendranath nowhere states that he had also been a member of the Indian League. But Akshaychandra

Sircar's statement gives proof of his being a member of it for some time.

My conclusion is that the plan of founding a political association for the middle class originated from and was first materialised by Sisirkumar ; that Surendranath, Anandamohan, Manomohan Ghosh and others all joined it at first, but owing to difference of opinion with Sisir-kumar and Sambhoochandra Mookerjee they left it. As Sisirkumar was looked upon almost as an intruder in the Calcutta society he failed to keep alive his Indian League.

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INDEX

A

Abdul Latif, 393-95
Academic Institution, 82, 86
Adam, John, 60
Adam, William, 112, 166, 256
Aga Khan, H. H., 212
Agri-horticultural Society, 170
Ajitkumar Chakravarty, 200
Akbar Shah, 187
Akshaychandra Sircar, 284
 relation with Bankim, 300
 analysis of political parties, 301, 302
 on forms of government, 303
 on rights of subjects, 303
 on individualism, 300
 on nationality, 305-06
Akshaykumar Dutta, 78
 birth and education, 124
 influence of Debendranath, 124
 editor, 125
 method of investigation, 126
 on Nature, 127
 on Dharma, 128
 on marriage, 128, 137-38
 on indigo-planters, 129
 on organismic theory, 130-131
 on enlightened self-interest, 132
 on society and individual, 133
 on problem of poverty, 133, 154
 on society and government, 135-37
 on object of government, 136
 on functions of government, 139
 on education, 139-46
 advocates translation of scientific works, 146
 on theory of punishment, 147-50
 on Ryots, 151, 215
 on excise policy, 151
 his ideal, 153-55
 on independence, 153
 on manufactures, 155
Alexander II, 241
Allison, 84
Altruism, 132
Ameer Ali, 268

Amir Ali, Khan Bahadur, Nawab, 393, 395
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 321, 388, 406
Amritalal Mitra, 81
Anandakrishna Bose, 126, 279, 307
Ananda Math, 422, 423
Anandamohan Bose, 288, 346
Anathnath Bose, 322, 344
Anthropogeographical School, 440
Aquinas, 2
Archbold, W. A. J., 270-271
Aristotle, 1, 2, 10, 126, 138, 255, 257
Arnot, 35
Aryabhata, 127, 144
Arya Darshan, the, 242
Association of Friends, the, 219
Asutosh Mookerjee—
 on liberty, 261
 on individualism, 261
 on state socialism, 263
 on nature of law, 263-64
 on case law, 264
 on equity, 265
 on Austin's theory, 265
Auber, Peter, 32
Aurobindo Ghosh, 410-19
Austin, 23, 265

B

Bacon, 83, 126, 144, 146
Bajinath, 40
Bande Mataram, 419-23
Bandhab, the, 375
Bangaduta, the, 5
Bankimchandra Chatterjee, 103, 118, 243, 355, 361
 patriotism, 402
 Dharma, 403, 406, 409, 411, 425-27
 society, 403-04
 political morality, 404
 influence of foreign writers, 407, 409, 410
 rationalism, 408
 utilitarianism, 408-09, 428

- nationalism, 412-34
 Bande Mataram song, 418-24
 Bengali language, 430-32
 history of Bengal, 432-33
 Provincial outlook, 433-34
 physical force, 434-41
 public opinion, 436-37
 non-violence, 439
 society and government, 441-46
 individual liberty, 446
 theory of equality, 447-60
 socialism 450-52, 470
 artisans and peasants, 456 ff.
 Brahmins, 457
 women, 458-59
 education, 460-63
 law and justice, 463-67
 British Indian Administration, 467-69
 Permanent Settlement, 471-73
 Bengal Annual, the, 81, 85
 Bengal Chronicle, the, 161
 Bengal Harukaru, the, 27, 84, 116, 148, 161
 Bengal Herald, the, 5, 161
 Bengal Past and Present, the, 228, 318
 Bengal Social Science Association, 216, 218, 257
 Bengal Spectator, the, 7, 81, 88, 89, 91, 115, 215
 editors, 109
 contributors, 110
 Bengalee, the, 224, 227
 Bentham, 2, 17, 18, 20, 30, 33, 42, 79, 111, 216
 Bentinck, Lord, 2, 65, 66, 101
 Berhampore College, 369
 Bethune, 174
 Bethune Society, the, 201-02, 211
 Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay, 158
 Bhabanicharan Mitra, 163
 Bharatuddhar Kavya, 288
 Bhaskaracharyya, 144
 Bholanath Chandra, 174, 176, 243, 307, 315
 career, 279
 Swadeshism, 280-83
 Mercantilism, 281
 Protection, 282
 Technical education, 283
 Bhudeva Mukhopadhyay, 139, 242, 269, 279, 284, 292
 Bididarta Samgraha, the, 286
 Bipinchandra Pal, 184, 327
 Black Acts, 175, 176
 Blackstone, 19, 36
 Bodin, 10
 Boykontonath Roy, 5
 Brahmins, 12, 456
 Brahma Samaj 92, 110
 Brajendranath Banerjee, 4, 8, 58, 110
 British Indian Administration—
 on attitude of ambitious men, 14
 of trading classes, 14
 of educated people, 64
 of 'Hindu Pioneer,' 90-91
 of Dwarkanath Tagore, 194
 of Govindachandra Dutta, 221
 of Digambar Mitra, 308
 of Sisirkumar Ghosh, 321
 of Bankimchandra, 467-69
 British India Advocate, the, 166
 British Indian Association, the, 165, 177-85, 202, 205, 251, 256, 292, 307, 341, 345, 473
 British India Society, the—
 in Bengal, 171-73, 174, 177
 in London, 243
 British Indian Society, the, 346
 Brougham, Lord, 166
 Brown, 86
 Buckingham, Mr., 22
 Buckle, H. T., 118, 220
 Burke, 10

C

- Cabbe, 450
 Calcutta Courier, the, 161
 Calcutta Journal, the, 22
 Calcutta Literary Gazette, the, 80
 Calcutta Madrasa, the, 392
 Calcutta Magazine, the, 80, 85
 Calcutta Quarterly Magazine, the, 28
 Calcutta Quarterly Magazine and Review, the, 72, 80
 Calvin, 9
 Campbell, A.D., 43-44
 Campbell, George, Sir, 353
 Canning, Lord, 256
 Caste System, 9, 13, 98, 274, 456, 457
 Chandranath Bose, 243, 276
 on Industries, 276-78
 on Swadeshism, 279
 Chandrasekhar Deb, 96, 170, 171
 Charter of the E. I. Co., 30, 181
 Chukerverty Faction, 106

Civil Liberty, 3, 20, 21, 46-56
 Civil Service Examination, 183
 Codification of laws, 7, 17, 19, 231
 Colonisation of India, 72-75, 89, 93-96, 194-95
 Comte, 126, 409-10
 Constitutional Society of India, the, 243
 Constitutional agitation, 156
 Contractual theory of government, 126
 Cooly, 460
 Courtney, T. P., 32
 Cowell, 271
 Crow, M., 172

D

Dacca people, 183, 342
 Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, 78, 81, 89, 107
 relation with Rammohan, 92-93
 colonization, 94
 career, 116
 equality, 116
 Indian history, 117
 origin of government, 119
 object of government, 120
 form of government, 120
 Judiciary, 121
 Police, 1, 21
 Indianization of Services, 121
 public opinion, 122
 representative legislature, 123
 political agitation, 177
 Dalhousie, Lord, 385
 Dampier, 197
 Dayabhad, 27
 Dayananda Saraswati, 336
 Debendranath Tagore, Maharshi, 87, 144, 157, 180
 Secretary, British Indian Association, 200
 Indianization of Services, 200
 Bethune Society, 201
 Police, 203
 Salt tax, 204
 Declaration of Rights, the, 16
 Deputy Collectors, 96, 97
 Derozio, H. V., 79-82, 91, 118
 Devaprasad Sarvadhikary, Sir, 217
 Dewan, 246
 Dewey, 444
 Dharma, 409
 Dhingra, 423

Digambar Biswas, 129, 344
 Digambar Mitra, 175, 255
 career, 306-07
 drafts the Memorial to Parliament, 308, 309, 474 ff.
 aristocracy, 310
 democracy, 311
 municipality, 311
 laissez faire policy, 312
 mass education, 313
 taxation, 314
 patriotism 314
 Dinabandhu Mitra, 129
 Directors, Court of, 31, 37
 District Charitable Society, 99
 Divorce in India, 128
 Dodwell, 384
 Downell, F. H., 244
 Duff, Dr., 87, 161, 186
 Durga, 422
 Durgamohan Das, 346
 Dutta, K. K., 4
 Dwarkanath Mitra, 468
 Dwarkanath Tagore, 5, 77, 97, 157, 160, 165, 307
 colonization, 72, 194
 zamindars, 93
 education, 111
 newspapers, 162-63
 subsidy to English public men, 167
 appreciation by George Thompson, 169
 brings Thompson to India, 170
 position in society, 192
 honoured in Wales, 193
 rouses public spirit, 193
 jury system, 195
 freedom of the Press, 195-96
 police reform, 195-98
 deputy magistrates, 197
 Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan, 242, 243, 293,
 career, 245
 form of government, 246
 advocates mixed constitution, 247
 causes of despotism, 247
 functions of government, 248
 social reforms, 249
 representative legislature, 250, 251
 Indian representative in England, 252
 freedom of the Press, 252
 jury system, 252

retrenchment, 253
capital punishment, 253
mass education, 254

E

East Indian, the, 81
East Indian Association, 242
East India Company, the, 3
Education and Government—
 Russikkrishna Mullick's views, 102-08
 Tarachand Chakravarty's views, 111
 Number of educated people, 160
Education of the Mohammedans, 390-95
Edwards, Thomas, 80, 86
Elizabeth, 333
Ellenborough, 211-12
Ellis, H., 28, 69
Elphinstone, 63
English education—
 effect of, 240, 323
Englishman, the, 322, 331
Enquirer, the, 161
Equality, theory of, 115, 447-60

F

Ferguson, Adam, 130
Fichte, 2
Force, Theory of, 434-41
Foreign Capital, 280
Fourier, 130
Franklin, 144
Free Trade advocated, 79
Friend of India, the, 62, 84, 122-23, 165

G

Gandhi, M. K., 9, 348, 375
Garibaldi, 242, 272
Ghosal, U. N., 190
Giddings, 460
Girishchandra Ghosh, 157
 editor, 224
 career, 225
 British rule indispensable, 225
 civil service, 225, 227
 stability and progress, 226
 hostile to democracy, 227
 jury system, 227

Gobindachandra Bysak, 81, 96
Gobindachandra Dutta, 157
 birth and education, 220
 against Panchayat, 221
 Police protection, 221-22
 equality, 222-23
 separation of powers, 223
 civil liberty, 223-24
Goethe, 152
Gourdas Bysak, 279
Goureechurun Bannerjee, 5
Gramavarta Prakasika, the, 246
Green, 2, 211
Gyananneshun, the, 88, 89, 99, 104, 161

H

Habeas Corpus Act, 48, 52
Halliday, F. J., 212
Haraprasad Shastri, 125
Harbans Sahai, 269
Harachandra Ghosh, 5, 81
Hardinge, Lord, 212
Hare, David, 81, 98, 140
Harihar Bose, 242
Harinath Majumdar, 246
Harishchandra Mukherjee, 98, 129, 157, 292
 career, 227-28
 on Company's rule, 228, 230, 231
 legislature, 229
 judiciary, 229, 230
 Three estates, 230
 civil service, 230
 codification, 231
 permanent settlement, 231-32
Hartington, Lord, 267
Hastings, Lord 58,
Hegel, 2
Hemantakumar Ghosh, 342
Henlart, Lord, 28
Herambachandra Maitra, 320
Hindoo Literary Society, the, 94
Hindu College students, 78, 79, 171, 193, 240
Hindu Intelligencer, the, 228
Hindu Mela, 242
Hindu Patriot, 224, 228, 316
Hindu Pioneer, the, 88, 90
Hobbes, 2
Hobhouse, 21
Honorary Magistrates, first, 192
Howell, 258

Huliram Dhaikiyal Phookun, 109
Humboldt, 146
Hume, 45, 83
Hutchinson, 147
Hyder Ali, 187

I

Ilbert, 271
India Gazette, the, 72, 85, 161
Indian Association, the, 267
Indian Magazine, the, 81
Indian Nationalism, causes of the
rise of, 240-41
Indian Reform Society, the, 205,
243
Indian Register, 161
Inquirer, the, 88
Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, 126,
137, 201, 219
Itsanuddin Ahmad, 4

J

Jagat Seth, 40, 302
Jails, 148
Jaladhar Sen, 246
Jatindramohan Tagore, 312
Jayaswal, K. P., 190
Jaykrishna Mukherjee, 178
Jimutabahana, 27
Jnanendramohan Tagore, 202
Jogendrachandra Ghosh, 285-86
against democracy, 287
Jogendranath Vidyabhushan—
career, 271
a radical reformer, 271
origin of state, 272
slavery, 273
equality, 274
nationalism, 275
proposes congress organisa-
tion, 275
John Bull, the, 72, 84, 90
Judiciary in India, defects of, 49 ff.,
179-82, 189-90, 220-24, 360-62
Jury System, 7, 50-52, 64-65, 158,
189, 208, 227, 362

K

Kalachand Seth, 87
Kaleenath Roy, 5

Kaleidoscope, the, 81
Kalicharan Banerjee, 346
Kalikrishna Deb, 178
Kaliprasanna Ghosh, 375
Kalpadrum, the, 247
Kant, 80
Karl Marx, 451
Kashiprasad Ghosh, 85
Keshabchandra Sen, 219
Kirkpatrick, 202
Kishorichand Mitra, 87, 157, 165,
175, 255, 256, 279
E. I. Co.'s rule, 217
equality, 218
education, 218-19
peasants, 219
Kissenmohan Mullick, 281
Krishnachandra Charira, 3
Krishnagar College, 369
Krishnamohan Banerjee, Rev., 87,
88, 114, 170, 245, 255
Krishnanath Roy, 246
Kristodas Pal, 268, 307
career, 315
self-government, 316
origin of state, 318
functions of government, 319
loyalty, 319
Protection, 320
Kyde, James, 192

L

Laissez faire, theory, 68, 75, 134,
211, 277, 312
Lalbehari De, 254-60
Lalmohan Ghosh, 242
career, 266
civil service examination, 267
representative legislature, 268
Landholders' Society, 163, 167, 174
177
Laplace, 126, 127, 146
Law and Morality, 17 ff.
Law of Nature, 127
Lawrence, Lord, 369
Lawrence, Sir John, 256
Legislature in India—
history of demand for, 41-45,
329-31, 179-85, 212, 213,
242, 250, 268, 329
Liang-Chi-Chao, 417
Lindsay, Judge, 271
Literary Gazette, the, 85

Lloyd, 71
 Local self-government, 3
 Locke, 2, 55, 126, 145, 210, 364
 Long, Rev. J., 129, 201, 202
 Louis Blanc, 450
 Louis Philippe, 113
 Louis XIV, 333
 Lowell, A. L., 460
 Luther, 9
 Lycurgus, 138

M

Macan, T., 32
 Machiavelli, 10
 Mackenzie, Holt, 38, 43, 92
 Macaulay, 148
 Maddock, H., 212
 Madhavachandra Mallick, 81, 96
 Madhava Rao, T., Sir, 315
 Madhusudan Sen, 172
 Maharaja of Burdwan, 268
 Maharaja of Darbhanga, 268
 Maharaja of Vizianagaram, 268
 Mahendralal Shome, 202
 Mahendralal Sircar, 140
 Maheschandra Ghosh, 81
 Mahomed Yusuf, 212, 269, 398-401
 Maine, 23
 Majumdar, R. C., 190
 Malhar Rao, the Gaekwar, 385, 386
 Malthus, 126
 Manmathanath Ghosh, 87, 116, 217, 222, 225, 279
 Markby, 26, 261
 Marriage Reforms, 138, 219, 271
 Marshman, J. C., 90, 212
 Marsiglio, 2
 Martin, R., 5
 Mass education, 256-60, 277, 372, 373, 460-463
 Matilal Ghosh, 344
 Mayo, Lord, 369
 Mazzini, 242, 272
 McNaghten, 28
 Mechanics' Institute, 170
 Meenacshya, J. C., 244
 Melville, 71
 Mercantilism, 281
 Metcalfe, Sir Charles, 6, 196
 Michael Madhusudan Dutta, 279
 Military expenditure, 70
 Mill, Dr., 80
 Mill, James, 41, 42

Mill, John Stuart, 65, 212, 255, 257, 272, 408, 410, 442, 446, 451, 454
 Milton, 56-57
 Mixed Constitution, 247
 Mohammadan Association, the, 393
 Mohammadans and Government Service, 390
 Mohammadans in Judicial Service, 390
 Mohammadan lawyers, 390
 Monohar Das, 40
 Monomohan Ghosh, 240
 career, 266
 separation of powers, 267
 Monperties, M., 80
 Montesquieu, 10, 16, 17, 48
 Mookerjee's Magazine, the, 280
 More, Sir Thomas, 255
 Morley, Lord, 212
 Mouat, J. F., 201
 Moulavi Ameer Hossein, 268
 Mowat, F. J., 149
 Mrinalkanti Ghosh, 321, 343
 Muftis, 40
 Muir, Ramsay, 387
 Munro, 69
 Murray, R. H., 18
 Murshidabad Patrika, the, 246

N

Nabagopal Mitra, 241-43, 284, 292, 346
 nationalism, 293, 294
 monarchy, 294
 representative government, 295
 individualism, 296
 representative in Parliament, 297
 mass education, 298-99
 Indianisation of Services, 299
 Nandakishore Bose, 242
 Narendranath Sen, 346
 National Church of India, 255
 National Indian Association, 243
 Nationalism in the West—
 effect of, 241
 National Militia, 70, 420
 National Mohammadan Association, 393
 National Paper, the, 242
 National Society, the, 242
 Native land as mother, 417-18
 Native Opinion, the, 346

Natural Rights, 79, 101, 156, 326
 Nawab of Rampore, 268
 Newton, 127, 144, 146
 N. N. Law, Dr., 4
 Norton, George, 329

O

Ochterlony, 84
 O'Conner Power, Z., 244
 "Old Hindoo," 84
 Organismic theory, 131-35

P

Paine, Tom, 83
 Panchayat, 50, 190, 357
 Parthenon, the, 88, 89
 Pascal, 144
 Patriarchal government, 272
 Patriotism, 85
 Pearychand Mitra, 157
 student of Hindu College, 78
 secretary, 87
 British India Society, 173
 Bethune Society, 202
 career, 209
 origin of government, 210
 Ryots, 211, 214
 functions of government, 211
 against communal representation, 213
 on legislature, 214
 Indianization of services, 214
 judicial reform, 216
 education, 216
 Pearymohan Mukherjee, 268
 Peasants, 68
 Permanent Settlement, 67, 259
 Pioneer, the, 322
 Plato, 2, 33, 125, 138, 255
 Police, 159, 182, 196-98, 204, 357
 Prabhakar, the, 83,
 Prasannacoomar Tagore, 6, 156,
 160, 178, 307
 his religious views, 82, 185
 on zamindars, 93, 163
 Zamindary Association, the, 163
 editor of the Reformer, 145, 185
 opinion of Dr. Duff, 186
 on government, 187
 Indianization of services, 188

judicial reforms, 189-90
 causes of despotism, 190
 on Freedom of the Press, 191
 on Jury system, 191
 Pratapchandra Sinha, 175
 Prince of Wales, visit of, 385
 Prinsep, H. T., 212
 Protection, 379
 Puffendorf, 307
 Punishment, theory of, 147-50,
 363-68
 Puritanism, 262

Q

Quill, the, 88

R

Rabindranath Tagore, 144
 Radhakanta Deb, Raja Sir, 126,
 163, 167, 178, 192, 308
 Radhakumud Mukherjee, 190
 Radhanath Sikdar, 81, 115-16,
 201
 Raja Pramathanath Roy, 268
 Raja Rajballabha, 188, 302
 Raja Sahib Dyal, 268
 Rajendralala Mitra, Raja, 165, 285
 Rajiblochan Roy, 3
 Rajkrishna De, 87
 Rajnarain Bose, 92, 106, 241, 243
 Rajputs, the, 3, 13, 121
 Ramanath Tagore, 5, 93, 307
 Ramchander Mitter, 171, 245
 Ramchandra Vidyabagish, 5, 168-
 69
 Ranigopal Ghosh, 78, 81, 87, 89,
 93, 157, 173, 175, 176, 178, 201,
 206-09
 Ramgopal Sanyal, 266
 Ramkamal Sen, 163
 Ramkrishna Paramhansa, 336
 Rammohun Roy—
 social and religious reforms, 2, 9
 birth, 3
 Vernacular Journal, 4
 freedom of the Press, 6, 37 ff.,
 55 ff.
 appreciation in England 7, 8
 use of inductive method, 10
 works, 11

- interpretation of history, 11, 12
 causes of loss of independence, 13
 as Dewan, 14
 rule of law, 14, 54
 natural rights, 16, 17
 separation of powers, 16
 law and morality, 17, 23 ff.
 codification, 18, 19
 civil liberty, 21, 22
 nationalism, 21
 democracy and imperialism, 22
 anticipates Austin, 24, 25
 legislature, 33
 East India Co.'s rule, 35, 36
 commissions of inquiry, 39
 process of law-making, 41-45
 judicial reforms, 49-54
 Panchayat, 50
 communal problems, 51
 religious toleration, 55
 economic activities of the govern-
 ment, 66 ff.
 Permanent Settlement, 67
 his ideal, 76
 colonization of India, 72, 95,
 96, 129
 his influence, 91, 92, 144, 173,
 184, 186
 Ramprasad, 3
 Ramtanu Lahiri, 81, 87, 89
 Rangpur Landholders' Society, 183
 Rani of Jhansi, 452
 Rathbone, William, 23
 Rationalism, 127-28
 Reformer, the, 161
 Reformation, 9
 Regulations, 30-31, 38, 40
 Reid, 86
 Retrenchment, 69, 70
 Revival of Hinduism, 408
 Richards, R., 69
 Ripon, Lord, 355
 Roncayne, J., 244
 Rusikkrishna Mullick, 78, 81, 89,
 92, 93, 209
 deputy collector, 96
 birth and education, 98
 editor, 99
 society and government, 99
 condemned the government of
 the company, 100
 judiciary, 101-02
 Indianization of services, 101
 education, 102-03
 ryots, 103
 representation in Parliament, 104
 Sabha, 246
 Sadi, 71
 Salary of judicial officers, 54
 Salisi boards, 347
 Samachar Chandrika, the, 158
 Samachar Darpan, 73, 160
 Sambad Kaumudi, 4, 158
 Sambhoochandra Mookerjee, 28%,
 317
 monarchy, 289-90
 loyalty, 290, 323, 346
 Samya, 447-60
 Sanial, S. C., 89
 Sankaracharya, 2
 Sarkar, S. C., Dr., 4
 Satischandra Chakravarty, 87, 168,
 200, 222
 Satyasaran Ghoshal, 178
 Savigny, 23
 Senate, 246
 Separate representation for the
 Mohammedans, 396-400
 Separation of Powers, 16, 49
 Serampore Missionaries, 7, 71, 158
 Shagaraf-nama-i-Walayat, 4
 Shivanath Shastri, 88, 92, 98, 222,
 288
 Shomeprakash, the, 242, 245
 Shyamachuran Sen, 173
 Sisirkumar Ghosh, 243
 criticism of British Indian
 Administration, 321-22
 causes of discontent, 323-26
 middle class democracy, 329 ff.
 origin of government, 331
 stages of political evolution,
 332-33
 parliament for India, 335-37
 nationalism in India, 336
 colonization of India, 338
 communal problems, 339
 Home-rule, 339
 All-India Political organization,
 341-42, 346
 Indian League, 341, 345, 346
 Indigo-disturbance, 343
 Zamindar and Ryot, 351
 mass education, 352
 local self-government, 353-59
 civil liberty, 359-62
 theory of punishment, 363-68
 education, 369-73
 freedom of the Press, 373-75

trade and industry, 375-79
retrenchment, 380-82
taxation, 382-83
British imperialism, 384 ff.
Sivachandra Deb, 5, 81, 96
Smith, Adam, 79
Social Contract theory, 130
Socrates, 144
Sourindramohan Tagore, 291
Speede, G.T.F., 171
Sree Kissen Singh, 170
Srinath Ghosh, 126
Stephen, Fitz-James, 261
Stewart, Dugald, 86
Sullivan, A. M., 244
Sullivan, John, 31, 42, 43, 64, 115
201
Surendranath Banerjea, Sir, 346
Sutherland, James, 62
Swadeshism, 279
Syed Ahmad, Sir, 212
Syed Mahmood, 395, 396

T

Tagore, G.M., 244
Tank Square, 84
Tarachand Chakravarti—
associate of Rammohun, 5, 92
leader of Young Bengal, 78, 87,
88, 105, 209
career, 106
appreciation, by George Thompson,
107
relation with Captain Richard-
son, 107.08
British India Society, 172
his learning, 107, 109
editor, Bengal Spectator, 110-
11
on education, 111-13
on government, 112
Indianization of services, 113-
14
Tarakchandra Bose, 89, 96
Tarinicharan Bandyopadhyay, 87
Tattvabodhini Pathshala, 139, 200
Tattvabodhini Patrika, 175, 200
Taxes on luxuries, 69

Temple, Sir Richard, 315, 346, 358
Theophilanthropic Society, 87, 217
Thiers, 84
Third Republic in France, 241
Thompson, George, 79, 97, 167,
169-73, 175
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 322
Tipu Pagla, 451
Trevelyan, Sir Charles, 240
Tri-colour flag, 84
Tucker, 71
Turton, 164

U

Unemployment of the educated
Bengalis, 323-324

V

Valadeva Vidyabhushan, 2
Vernacular Press Act, 374
Vidyadarshan, 142
Vishnucharan Biswas, 129, 344

W

Wallace, 242
Warden, F., 64
Washington, 141
Wedderburn, David, 266
Willoughby, 24
Wilson, H. H., 160
Winternitz, 4
Witenagemot, 246
Woodford, 16
Wynn, C. W. W., 59

Y

Young Bengal, 91, 140

Z

Zamindari Association, 163-65

